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Kent on Sunday

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Mid edition No 763

COUNTY ELECTIONS

TRUE BLUE YET AGAIN

All the results as Ukip wiped out and Labour and Lib Dems limp home

TRANSPORT

Row over station threats

Anger amid concerns for key commuter stops

AIRPORT

Manston saga takes latest twist

Fresh interest but is it just pre-election hot air?

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It's all true blue, but just what happened to Ukip?

HOWEVER expected the Conservatives' complete domination of Kent County Council was at Thursday's vote, I think few truly felt the opposition to return so little, well, opposition.

The utter annihilation of Ukip - who started this week as the main opponents to the Conservative in the council chamber of County Hall but ended it with precisely no representation at all - is surely a sign the public view the party's job as done. While it may have always argued it was not a one issue party, the reality of Brexit has clearly been seen by the public as the end of it's useful life.

The complete failure of the Liberal Democrats and Labour to return more than a mere dribble of councillors is one which is of concern, however. As we mention in our coverage of the results inside this issue, to have a chamber so dominated by one party is not necessarily healthy for a vibrant democratic process.

Whatever the Conservative group wants, it will face no real opposition to deliver.

But then Ukip never really offered much in the way of opposition over the past four years - almost invisible as they have been at county council level.

Labour, however, must now be only too aware what a mountain they face come June 8. Kent has possibly never been so defiantly Conservative and the prospect of any seat going to any party other than that of Theresa May's seems like pure fantasy.

However, perhaps the biggest issue is the lacklustre turnout - with just over 30 per cent bothering to vote. It does lend credibility to the claim that Ukip activated those disillusioned with politics. And having made their voice heard they have disappeared once more. Until the next time, at least.

Editor **Chris Britcher**

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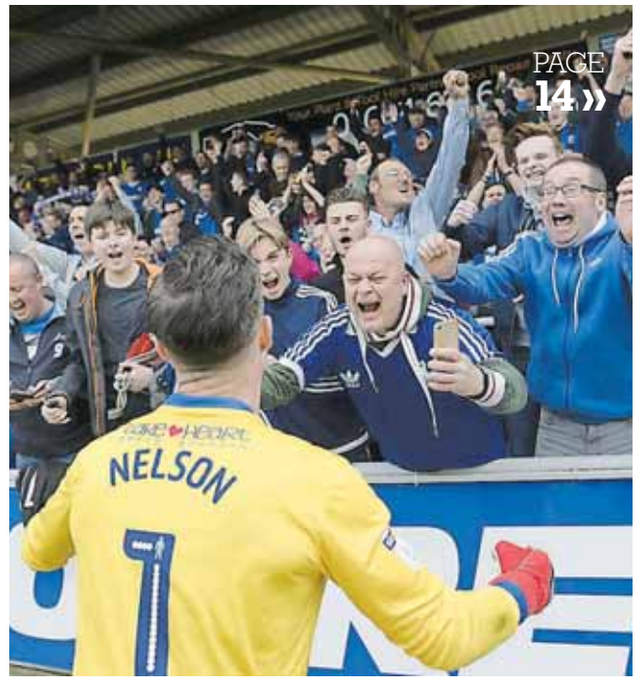

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Could children's centres close as budget squeezed?

By Tom Pyman
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THREAT: Children's centres could close under council proposals

ALL children's centres across Medway could be forced to close as the council looks to reform its services for young families under growing budget pressures.

Council chiefs will discuss the radical proposals on Tuesday in a crunch meeting to decide how best to meet its statutory responsibilities for early years services.

As cash from central government dries up, the local authority is looking to pour more resources into children and families in most need in the district.

Closing all centres, and reinvesting funding into other service priorities, is one of three options members will discuss.

The alternatives are organising centre staff in a single, centrally-based team that works with families in local venues across Medway, or creating four 'super hub' centres.

Creation of the hubs, located in Gillingham and Twydall; Luton and Rainham; Strood, Peninsula and Rochester West; and Rochester East, Chatham and Walderslade is the council's recommended option but all three will go out to public consultation.

These four areas have been identified to reflect local need and demand for services, and while it is far too early to earmark any potential venues, each would have large enough premises to allow for a range of family and group activities.

If given the green light following consultation, these centres would combine children's centre services for 0-5-year-olds, with early help teams who work with families and children who are aged five and upwards.

Tory councillor Andrew Mackness said: "This is all about looking at what we have and thinking innovatively about how we can transform the service we already offer for families and young people in Medway.

"The welfare of children and families in Medway and helping them realise their potential remains a top priority for the council and we are committed to finding a different but effective way of continuing to provide good early years services for Medway families.

"The option being recommended for consultation would allow us to continue to deliver quality children's services with a particular focus on those most in need."

The consultation is planned to start on Tuesday, May 23 and will run for six weeks.

Tories pile on pressure to hospital trust chief to protect city's site

POLITICIANS Julian Brazier and Helen Whately have written to the chief executive of an under-fire health trust calling for an acute hospital and medical school to ease a growing crisis in Canterbury.

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust has been widely criticised in recent weeks after announcing stroke patients will temporarily not be taken to Kent & Canterbury but instead to other hospitals in Ashford and Margate.

It followed the trust's decision to move more than half of the junior doctors at the Canterbury site to the William Harvey and QEQM, due to a lack of permanent consultant doctors who oversee and support their training.

Additionally, it announced hundreds of patients attending the K&C's urgent care centre by ambulance would instead be taken to the emergency departments at the other east Kent hospitals.

The trust says its controversial decisions are being made to maximise patient safety and insists no permanent changes would be made without public consultation.

Now Sir Julian Brazier and Helen Whately, who are seeking re-election in the constituencies of Canterbury and Faversham and Mid Kent in the general election, have met with trust chief executive Matthew Kershaw.

In a letter sent to hammer home the message, the pair said: "We believe that the forthcoming consultation should propose an acute hospital at Canterbury.

"This should be included in at least one of the options, otherwise you will not be giving residents a genuine choice. Secondly, Kent would benefit enormously from a medical school to attract the brightest and best doctors, nurses and other health professionals here."

Mrs Whately added: "Everyone recognises things have to change, so now is the moment to seize the initiative and be ambitious."

Dumped spaniel had claws 'forcibly removed', says vet

AN investigation is under way by the RSPCA after a spaniel was found by the side of a busy road after having her claws forcibly removed.

The black and white pooch was dumped in a bush on the A20 at Harrietsham, between Ashford and Maidstone, on Tuesday night.

A passer-by found the aniaml and took the one-year-old bitch, named Flick, to a nearby vet.

An RSPCA spokesperson said: ''She had no form of identification and isn't microchipped so we're unsure as to where she's come from.

''She has a docked tail and some really nasty wounds on her feet and her legs. Vets believe she has had her claws forcibly and traumatically removed, while her legs are covered in pressure sores and urine scald.''

Could 40mph limit finally be lifted from A20 at Dover?

AN ''absurd'' 40mph speed limit on the main road approaching Dover must be axed as soon as possible, the transport secretary has been told.

Constituency Tory candidate Charlie Elphicke met Chris Grayling to put pressure on the government in scrapping the limit on the A20, after Highways England agreed to make the speed limit variable last autumn.

Mr Elphicke said: ''First of all they said they would have this absurd speed limit gone by March. Then they said it won't be gone until June.

''Yet again they show they are not fit for purpose and have failed to get on with the job. They continue to subject local people to delays.

Highways England says work would be complete by the end of July.

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Jail for driver who smashed into beauty salon

A DANGEROUS driver who smashed his car in Thanet into a beauty salon, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage, is this weekend starting a jail sentence.

Daniel Wisdom. 25. from Minster, near Ramsgate, admitted charges of careless driving, driving whilst disqualified, no insurance and no MOT at Margate magistrates. He was sentenced to 120 days behind bars.

Wisdom suffered life-changing injuries in the crash while his two 15-year-old passengers were also hurt when he smashed at 1.45am on September 17 last year on Tothill Street. PC Christopher Oliver-Jones said: ''This sentence sends out a strong message that drivers will be held accountable for their actions.''

Horrific car crash claims the lives of musicians as thousands are donated

By Emily King
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TRIBUTES have been paid to two young popular musicians killed in an horrific crash on the A20 in Farningham, near Dartford, in the early hours of last Saturday morning.

Dartford's Mike Crampton, keyboard player with local band The Pisdicables and friend James Montegriffo, from Gibraltar, were killed and eight other people injured as a result of the smash in Eglantine Lane just after 1.20am on April 29.

Both victims, on their way to see friends in West Kingsdown, were 23.

Another man was airlifted to a London hospital with serious injuries. Seven others were treated for less serious injuries.

Mr Crampton's family said: "Michael was a loving son, an incredible brother and the best friend that anybody could have. There are no words to encapsulate the sheer joy and happiness Michael brought to so many. A sense of humour, his presence in the room brought a smile to every face. A brilliant young man with great ambition and a great musician, an amazing array of friends and a heart filled to the brim with the deepest love for everyone."

RIP: Mike Crampton

Officers are continuing to appeal for information from witnesses who may have seen the collision, which happened at around 1.20am. They would like to hear from anyone who saw a black Vauxhall Insignia with a 61 registration plate being driven on the A20 from the direction of Brands Hatch towards Swanley. A blue Citroen Berlingo van and a white VW Polo were also involved in the collision.

A fundraising page set up in honour of the two friends, launched on Wednesday, swamped the initial £500 target within 24 hours with more than £2,000 pledged - a number that continued to grow throughout the week.

Writing on their Facebook page, the band said: "I can't even begin to tell you how much we are hurting right now. We have lost our brother, an incredible and unique human who will be irreplacable to everyone who was lucky enough to know him. We love you Mike."

Witnesses are asked to call the serious collision investigation unit on 01622 798535.

ACTOR: Orlando Bloom

Orlando: I'd be a muscular James Bond

FORMER Canterbury schoolboy turned Hollywood A-lister, Orlando Bloom, says he would love to play secret agent James Bond.

The star of a host of major franchises, such as the Lord of the Rings and Pirates of the Caribbean, says he would play a "very English" 007 if given a chance.

Speaking on the BBC this week, the star, who grew up in the cathedral city and attended the plush independent St Edmund's School, said he'd leap at the chance of following in the footsteps of Daniel Craig.

The actor said: "I grew up loving those films. Who didn't. But I'm sure they're going to probably do more with Daniel and who knows where they will go with that.

"That franchise is part of the fabric of our society. It's something that people really relate and laugh at and enjoy. A little bit of who Jack Sparrow [from Pirates of the Caribbean] is, that kind of wink and twinkle behind the eye.

"If I did it I think there'd be a bit of that. You know, a bit of that very English sort of twinkle with the muscular dynamic."

Daniel Craig has hinted his time in the role is coming to an end following a string of hugely successful movies including Skyfall and Spectre.

Petitions on hold as parliament dissolves

PETITIONS gathering thousands of signatures against controversial transport proposals in Kent are being stopped in their tracks by the general election.

Thousands have already voiced their opposition to government suggestions such as changes to rail services in the county, and the decision to locate the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend.

However, the online petitions closed at midnight on Monday when parliament officially dissolved ahead of the election on June 8.

The government is obliged to respond to petitions with 10,000 signatures, while those which reach 100,000 signatures must be considered for a debate in parliament.

Thus far, more than 2,500 have signed a document calling on the government to change the Lower Thames Crossing decision and 5,000 against proposals to remove some services from stopping at stations between Tonbridge and Ashford under the next rail franchise.

Hospital trust given 'good' rating by CQC

HEALTH bosses across Bexley and Bromley have been given a boost after an inspection of services by the Care Quality Commission rated them as 'good'.

The Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust - which oversees the Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup in addition to a host of clinics and other hospital sites across the two boroughs, Greenwich and into Kent - had been termed 'needs improvement' when inspectors had last visited in April. But the CQC said it was impressed with how it had responded.

Now the trust insists it is pushing forward seeking an even higher mark next time.

Andy Trotter, chair of Oxleas NHS, said: ''I would like to thank everyone for their efforts in making improvements where they were needed. This new rating reflects not only their hard work but the commitment of staff across the whole organisation, who go above and beyond on a daily basis.''

Ify Okocha, medical director, added: ''I am confident we will be able to maintain this and even do better.''

Hackers post onto council's Twitter feed

BOSSES at Medway Council were left red-faced on Tuesday night after the local authority's Twitter account was taken over by hackers.

A series of tweets were posted before 8pm, promising policies such as ''free council tax for all'', before being swiftly deleted.

The council apologised for any offence caused as dozens took to the social media platform to express their amusement after the rogue tweeter claimed the account had been taken over by the ''citizens of Medway''.

One tweet read: ''First policy - free council tax for all. You won't need to pay any more council tax from now.''

Another one said: ''Second policy. Park where you want - no more tickets.''

After deleting the comments, the council tweeted last night: ''Our account was hacked for a short time earlier this evening.

''Sorry for any offence caused by the tweets which have now been removed.''

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Council slammed over pool's norovirus outbreak findings

By Chris Britcher
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AN outbreak of vomitting bug norovirus, caused by a dye to change the colour of the water to blood red for a Halloween event, has been slammed by council opponents.

A report by Public Health England (PHE) into the incident at Rainham's Splashes leisure complex, was published on Friday.

The outbreak made 120 people ill.

The investigation confirmed chlorine levels in the pool at the start of the day last October were at a level which means norovirus should not have been able to spread in the water. However further checks were not formally recorded by staff after 2pm, and it was not clear whether chlorine levels were maintained above recommended levels for this period. PHE said this went against the council's own standard procedures.

During special themed pool parties dye is added to the water and the chlorine level is knowingly lowered, but remains within national pool water advisory guidelines, to allow for the dye to take effect.

PHE concluded that "prompt and robust actions undertaken by leisure management and Medway Council's environmental health team in response to the reported outbreak mitigated further risks to pool users".

OUTBREAK: Splashes in Rainham turned water red for a Halloween event

Medway Council's portfolio holder for community services Howard Doe said: "I would like to say again on behalf of the council that we are sorry to those who felt unwell after enjoying the pool party. This was a rare and isolated incident for Medway."

But Andy Stamp, Labour group spokesman for community services said: "Whilst I am pleased Cllr Doe has finally apologised to the public, it shouldn't have needed an in-depth public investigation and six months to pass for him to do so.

"PHE's findings are pretty damning and this norovirus outbreak could have been avoided. Medway Council knowingly and intentionally reduced the chlorine dose in the pool in order for the red pool dye to take effect, putting public health at risk. To make matters worse, the council was unable to demonstrate to PHE that the chlorine levels in the pool were high enough to meet national guidelines because it did not keep sufficient records of the chlorine checks that were made."

Cops arrest six after morning drugs bust

SIX people arrested as part of a drugs bust by police in Margate have been released pending further enquiries.

Officers raided a property in King Street on Tuesday and seized approximately 700 small packets of what they believe to be cocaine and heroin in addition to about £2,000 in cash.

Those arrested include people from Margate, Ashford, London and Herefrodshire.

School confirms new head for September

The North School in Ashford has confirmed Anna Lawrence will become its new head teacher in September.

The current deputy head will take over from Nicki Hodges who will be taking on a new role within the Swale Academies Trust as its director of teaching schools and leadership development

Staff's baby boom

MATERNITY staff at Darent Valley Hospital in Dartford have given birth to 26 babies since last February - with two more on the way.

The in-house baby-boom has seen 16 girls and 10 boys so far - including a set of twins.

The new mums include delivery suite co-ordinator Kelly Gray who gave birth to baby Chloe in September.

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Marathon runner gets both his stolen car and medal back

A CAR stolen from a London Marathon runner just hours after he completed the famous race last month has been found.

Andrew Barrs, 44, from Broadstairs, had been left heartbroken after his Citroen C4 with his medal, children's toys and sentimental photos inside was pinched by thieves on April 23 in Gillingham.

The Southeastern production manager ran the 26-mile course last April for the first time to raise money for children with cancer, 10 years after his brother, Jason, was first diagnosed with myeloma (pictured). Despite a bone marrow transplant from Andrew, Jason died weeks later aged just 45.

The car was stolen as he stopped with his son at the McDonald's restaurant in the High Street.

His medal and running vest were later found in a nearby garden and police have confirmed the car was recovered in Boundary Road, Chatham, when officers also arrested a 45-year-old woman from Gillingham. She was then released from custody pending further enquiries.

Anyone with information can call Kent Police on 01634 792209 quoting reference XY/018375/17.

PM faces pressure from Essex over crossing route

THE prime minister has been grilled over last month's decision to locate the Lower Thames Crossing east of Gravesend.

Theresa May met with Conservative candidate for Thurrock, Jackie Price-Doyle, last week to discuss the route, with her Essex constituency set to be severely affected by the plans.

The Department for Transport announced some £6bn was to be invested in a crossing which would run from the M25 near North Ockendon, via the A13 at Orsett before crossing under the Thames, east of Tilbury and Gravesend.

A new link road will then take traffic to the A2 near Shorne, close to where the route becomes the M2.

Campaigners in north Kent have vowed to keep fighting against the decision, with the Lower Thames Crossing Association group accusing Highways England of manipulating data in its consultation report.

Gravesham Tory candidate Adam Holloway has also said the route must be opposed.

Ms Price-Doyle said: "I have been fighting this route since it was first proposed in 2009. This proposed route is too close to people's homes and I am utterly opposed to the new junction on the M25. At the moment it is just a line on a map, it must be changed."

However, political figures in Dartford, including Conservative candidate Gareth Johnson, insist the government's decision was the correct one.

Ex council leader dies

TRIBUTES have been paid to Len Newton, the former leader of Bexley council, who passed away this week.

The Conservative served as a councillor for 37 years from 1977 to 2010 and was leader for 17. His daughter Caroline is also a councillor.

M20 resurfacing works

MOTORISTS are being warned from Monday, the westbound carriageway between junctions six and five at Maidstone will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am to allow for resurfacing work.

A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A229, M2 and A228.

Diesel raid costs £5,000

POLICE were quizzing a man after red diesel was stolen from a Shell petrol station on the Shipbbourne Road in Tonbridge.

Officers say the damage caused was worth nearly £5,000.

A 40-year-old was released as investigations continue.

Open day for police

KENT Police will mark its 100th anniversary with an open day on July 2.

Held at the Kent Police College in Coverdale Avenue in Maidstone, it runs from 10am to 4pm and will explain what the service does and feature displays by specialist teams throughout the day.

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Voyeur starts prison term

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

A PERVERT who rigged two houses with covert cameras so he could film people bathing, showering and having sex has been jailed for voyeurism offences.

Stuart Wynne, 50, of Ruby Walk in King's Hill, West Malling, was jailed for 30 months by Judge Simon James at Canterbury Crown Court after being charged with 16 offences dating from 1998 to 2015.

During a trial in March he was convicted of five offences and was found not guilty of the remaining 11.

Wynne rigged up covert cameras in two houses, one in Beltinge, Herne Bay, and one in Hoath.

At the house in Beltinge cameras were hidden in the main bathroom, under the sink in the downstairs toilet, and in a ceiling fan and an infrared alarm case in a spare bedroom.

At the house in Hoath cameras were found hidden behind mirrors in the main bathroom and the ensuite bathroom.

Discs were discovered at the house in Hoath showing images of Wynne's victims showering, bathing, using the toilet and having sex.

Police were alerted in December 2014 and the defendant arrested.

UNFORGIVABLE: Stuart Wynne rigged up cameras to watch people have sex and using the shower

He claimed he initially installed the cameras because he suspected people in the houses were taking drugs, although during an early police interview he admitted secretly filming people for his own sexual gratification.

Sentencing him to 30 months in prison for the five offences, Judge James said the victims had been "violated" by Wynne videoing and copying images of them and he had caused a great deal of upset and stress.

Judge James said the offending had involved a "significant" degree of planning and a "callous" abuse of trust, and that instead of admitting he was filming for his own sexual gratification, Wynne made up stories about why he did what he did, seeking to blame everyone other than himself.

Along with the 30 month prison sentence, Wynne was also made the subject of a 10 year sexual harm prevention order and was placed on the Sex Offenders' Register for 10 years.

Detective constable Julia Pettman said: "Wynne used his professional skills as an audio visual specialist to rig two houses with hidden cameras. His conduct was unforgiveable."

Road reopens fortnight early

A SECTION of a busy country lane linking the villages of Bredgar and Hollingbourne reopened on Friday, a fortnight earlier than expected, following the essential upgrade of a water main.

The work was undertaken to improve the capacity of the network and ensure water pressure is maintained to the area due to increased demand for water from local farmers.

Construction of the 284-metre section of new pipe started on April 3, with a road closure in force on the B2163 at Bicknor.

Toddler snatch probe ongoing

POLICE have spoken with a woman in connection with the attempted abduction of a toddler from Asda in Belvedere.

The child's mother was at the checkout when a woman lifted the 18-month old child out of the shopping trolley, on April 23.

A police spokesman said: "A woman handed herself into the police station. She has not been arrested but enquiries are ongoing."

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PRESSURE: Transport secretary Chris Grayling has once again been forced to clarify plans for the next franchise - currently run by Southeastern - are only proposals and not fixed in stone

Chorus of criticism grows louder over controversial rail proposals

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

THE chorus of concern over government proposals for small Kent stations in the south eastern rail franchise zone grew ever louder this week after campaigners described the plans as "madness".

The Department for Transport is currently consulting on how to shape rail services in the county after 2018 and has caused a stir with a number of its suggestions since it was launched back in March.

Its latest controversy is proposals to change service delivery on the line between Ashford and Tonbridge.

Under the plans, some trains on that popular route would no longer stop at small, rural stations like Pluckley, Headcorn, Staplehurst, Marden, and Paddock Wood, in a bid to speed up journey times.

Campaigners at Save Kent Trains have previously warned such plans would be "disastrous" for local communities and could potentially lead to the closure of the stations altogether.

A petition against the proposals was launched and received more than 10,000 signatures before being closed on Wednesday as parliament dissolved ahead of the general election.

When MPs return to Westminster in the summer, the government is obliged to issue a response to that petition as it has done to other documents outlining opposition to its plans.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England and parliamentary candidates for Maidstone and the Weald are among those to have thrown their weight behind the challenge over the last few days.

CPRE Kent chair, Christine Drury, said: "To cut or add uncertainty about rail services for villages where development is being deliberately focused because of the stations is madness.

"It will lead to more land banking, more unbuilt permissions and more five-year housing land supply failures.

"Plus, there will be uncertainty and unfair changes for the communities already living close to and relying on these stations."

Conservative candidate Helen Grant said: "I absolutely share the deep concerns amongst local people about a seemingly ambiguous proposal that could result in a reduction of the number of trains on the Staplehurst and Marden line.

"I firmly believe that this is a time where critical commuter services from our rural villages need to be strengthened.

"Marden and Staplehurst require a train service at least once every half an hour in order to accommodate the demand.

"It is important, however, to remember that these are draft proposals forming just a part of a broad consultation into future train services in the south east.

"The government's commitment to holding this consultation, and their promise to consider the responses in full, is in fact an opportunity to put forward our own shopping basket of needs and improvements, not just to oppose one clearly ridiculous suggestion.

"I have this week written to the secretary of state for transport about this issue to get to the bottom of the proposal and to voice my strong opposition to any reduction in services from our rural stations.

"I have also requested an urgent meeting with him. Such action would have wide-ranging effect on rural commuters and would have a serious knock-on effect upon stations not affected."

Liberal Democrat candidate Emily Fermor added: "It is important we reject any attempt to cut services to our rural communities.

"Having been brought up in these villages, I know how beautiful they are, and it is important for families, and for the elderly and disabled, and those who rely on transport for work, that they continue to be vibrant communities with good and reliable transport links."

In the consultation, the DfT said: "We are also exploring various options for reducing the journey time on the existing mainline route between Hastings and Charing Cross via Tonbridge.

"For instance, reducing calls at less well used stations could deliver an hourly fast service.

"Other services would still stop at these stations.

"This approach could also be adopted on other routes, such as Tonbridge to Ashford.

"Although we would be delivering faster journeys, we recognise that this has the potential to inconvenience passengers that currently use those intermediate stations."

■ **The consultation closes on May 23 and is available to view at http://bit.ly/2n4swEq.**

28,000 VOICE CONCERN OVER NORTH KENT SUGGESTIONS

TRANSPORT secretary Chris Grayling has already been forced into defending the consultation a number of times in the House of Commons over separate proposals for services in the north of the county and south east London.

Labour MP Clive Efford told Mr Grayling that passengers in the region were ''incandescent with rage'' over a suggestion that all Metro services on the north Kent line between Dartford and Charlton, as well as those in Greenwich and Bexleyheath, would terminate at Cannon Street only, rather than several different termini in the capital.

Indeed some 28,000 people have voiced their concern over the plans, to which the DfT issued an official response last month.

Bosses clarified: ''We are not proposing to reduce or change specific services.

''This question is being asked because passengers have indicated that reducing delays is a priority.''

They added that the completion of the Thameslink programme and the opening of the Elizabeth line - upon which there have been calls for an extension to Gravesend - would provide more journey choices for passengers.

Mr Grayling himself has also been quick to point out that the proposals are merely suggestions, and that the DfT will listen to feedback from the public over the coming weeks and months.

''This is a consultation, we haven't taken any decisions, we haven't even got an intent,'' he said.

DEVELOPMENTS: An unnamed US logistics company has stepped forward and declared interest in purchasing the former airport site

American firm reveals Manston plans as Gale questions timing

News of a fresh £100m investor looking to get planes flying again broke earlier this week, but critics wonder if the timing - 24 hours before key figures stood in a local election - was all too convenient

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

SIR Roger Gale has dismissed the announcement of a fresh £100m investor in the future of Manston airport this week as "a kite being flown on the eve of an election".

It was revealed on Wednesday morning that an American logistics company was due to meet chiefs at Thanet District Council this week in pursuit of a compulsory purchase order (CPO) for the 750-acre site.

The unnamed US firm has roots in Europe and is looking for a base to relocate 12 aircraft of its clients currently at a European hub, and sees the airport's location, with close access to London and the cross-Channel ferry ports, as ideal.

The site is currently owned by bosses behind the Stone Hill Park project - which aims to deliver 2,500 homes and leisure facilities, while insisting the area's history and heritage will be respected and maintained - and have recently claimed work on their own plans could begin as early as this year.

However, the news was announced just 24 hours before voters went to the polls to elect county councillors, with TDC leader Chris Wells among those standing in the vote.

The Ukip candidate for Cliftonville has come under criticism for his stance on developments in recent months, and Sir Roger admitted to KoS the timing of the announcement was "curious". Cllr Wells saw Ukip sweep to power in Thanet with a pledge to re-open Manston - but subsequently has ruled it out.

Reacting this week, the Conservative parliamentary candidate for Thanet North insisted he believed RiverOak Strategic Partners (RSP) was still best-placed to get planes flying on the site once again and said a minimum of £150m would be needed for the project to upgrade the necessary infrastructure on the site.

A new UK-operating firm launched earlier this year, and RSP announced last week it would launch a public consultation into its plans to obtain a CPO for the site through a development consent order (DCO), shortly after the general election in June.

"RiverOak is the only show in town," Sir Roger said.

"They are utterly loyal, completely dedicated and have already invested a significant sum of money; they are a long way down the track.

"That said, I am interested in anyone looking to re-open the airport - I would suggest they get in touch with RiverOak and make common cause."

Sir Roger questioned the stance of Cllr Wells, involved heavily in the announcement, who has supported a damning report by Avia Solutions which concluded last year that aviation operations on the site were very unlikely to be financially viable.

"It's accepted that the report was not terribly substantial," Sir Roger said. "Wells withdrew his opposition to change of use of four buildings on the site – why?

"If he wanted an airport, why would he do that? I find it curious that someone is coming forward now - what's changed?

"This is a kite being flown on the eve of an election and I would not be remotely surprised if it disappears into a cloud of dust shortly after."

In response to Sir Roger's comments, Cllr Wells KoS: "I'm not in charge of the timing.

"It's no more convenient than the other stuff RiverOak has been churning out in concert with the Conservatives' election campaign.

"This needs to be done properly and legally. If others who are interested in investing in the airport independently choose not to deal with RiverOak that is their decision, upon which it would not be correct for me to pass further comment.

"The council's support of the Avia report is unchanged - indeed it would seem appropriate for the team from Avia to cast their rigorous eye over any potential partners.

"Sir Roger will recall RiverOak would not submit their plans to such rigorous, detailed examination.

"Of one thing I am certain, whatever plans are presented will have to take into account the interests of the residents of Ramsgate."

Dale Crawford, of German-based consultancy DTD Consult, which is representing the company, said: "There is a clear commercial need for additional airport capacity in the south east.

"Compared to all the difficulties involved in building extra runways at Gatwick or Heathrow, Manston offers some clear advantages to ambitious operators looking for a speedy solution to their logistical needs."

Local business leader David Foley who manages the Thanet & East Kent Chamber of Commerce added: "Mr Crawford has contacted the chamber with an outline of his plans. We understand that over £100m is available for investment.

"The undoubted success of the offshore windfarms has shown how important it is to our east Kent companies to welcome inward investors.

"We will be encouraging our chamber members to supply any new development with their products and services."

Reacting to the war of words between Sir Roger and the council leader, a spokesperson for RSP said: "We read this news with interest, although we find it curious that it has not come formally from Thanet council, but instead from Cllr Wells, who has long argued that Manston's aviation days are surely over.

"Also it is not clear to us exactly what kind of operations are envisaged.

"The word 'logistics' is used, which could cover anything from executive jet travel to night flights for integrator traffic. Nevertheless, we remain open minded.

"Having invested heavily in the research, environmental and business planning work required to bring our development consent order application to public consultation stage, we would be happy to meet with this party, as we have done with other similarly interested parties, to discuss how we might work together to maximise this additional potential opportunity."

A spokesperson for the Supporters of Manston Airport group added: "We must make it clear that as campaigners, there are no flying of kites here.

"We want what we have always fought for - the return of Manston airport, and we have not stopped working to that end to give it the best possible chance of success.

"We have remained open to discussions with any parties that could achieve that."

Ray Mallon, spokesman for the site owners, said bosses would be happy to meet with the party, but insisted again there were no plans to walk away from their own project.

"Stone Hill Park will continue with its plans and I'm absolutely confident that this new company's proposal will end up going nowhere just like the previous attempt by RiverOak."

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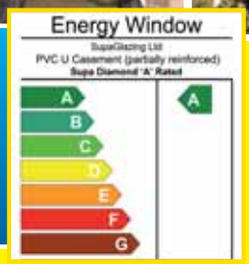

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KOS/15

Gills breathe a sigh of relief as they survive relegation scare

After a traumatic season which saw the Medway team slowly creep towards the drop zone, last Sunday they secured the point necessary to be certain of League One football next season

By Tom Pyman
Tom.Pyman@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM boss Ady Pennock admits securing the club's League One status last Sunday made for "an emotional day".

The Gills went into their final match of the season at Northampton Town just one point above Port Vale and the relegation zone.

In an added twist of irony, their opponents were managed by Justin Edinburgh, who was sacked as Gills boss by chairman Paul Scally at the end of the year.

Pennock's side needed to equal or better Vale's result at Fleetwood Town to avoid the drop and managed to do that as both matches ended goalless.

The Gills dominated a nervy encounter at Sixfields, in which skipper Josh Wright had a penalty saved, and Pennock told KoS prior to the game his team needed to remain positive in order to secure a result.

"It's an emotional day to be honest, I'm very happy for everybody at the club," he said.

"This game is phenomenal; you can be so happy one minute and down the next. That's why we love it so much.

"I thought we played very well and I thought we deserved the three points, so I've got to give the players a lot of credit. I'm very happy to have stayed in this league.

"With everything that's gone on over the last 12 weeks, I thought Port Vale were going to score [late on against Fleetwood].

"We've been tested massively since I've been here, both in the changing room and off the pitch.

"Somebody said to me that I should write a book about the last few weeks; they've been unbelievably tough.

"I was desperate for us to score for the fans; they were fantastic. I also want to give credit to my staff, too, who have worked so hard."

When Pennock was appointed at Priestfield in January, he was talking up hopes of a late surge towards the play-offs, after the Gills just missed out on a top six place last season, having been top of the table for large parts of the campaign.

He told us last week ahead of the game that his players shouldn't have been in such a precarious position and insists he wants to remain in the dugout next season, implementing his own plans to turn the club's fortunes around.

"I've got a project in place to show the chairman," he said.

"We've got to start again; we need to get people in who care about this football club. We need stability here.

"We should never have been in this position, it's a fantastic club. I want people to run through walls for the shirt."

Meanwhile, just hours before the match on Sunday, it was announced that striker Rory Donnelly "has been suspended from his employment at the club with immediate effect".

The club has subsequently declined to comment further on the matter.

SAFE: It was a nervy encounter, but Gillingham emerged with the point necessary to protect their League One status. Now boss Ady Pennock needs to convince chairman Paul Scally he remains the man for the job. All pictures: ADY KERRY

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Global influence of gothic revival's Pugin

A book has been published focusing on the life and impact of an architect who built a legacy from his home in Ramsgate

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

A BOOK lifting the lid on the life and influence of architect Augustus Pugin has been published by a leading academic at the University of Kent.

Pugin, best known for his gothic revival work - most notably the interior of the Palace of Westminster - also designed his own home in Ramsgate, where he died at the age of 40 in 1852.

Gothic Revival Worldwide: AWN Pugin's Global Influence, was edited by Dr Timothy Brittain-Catlin at the Kent School of Architecture (KSA) at the university.

He teamed up with the Pugin Society and Thanet District Council, and relied on contributions from KSA's Dr Henrik Schoenefeldt, an expert on the building of Pugin's Palace of Westminster and is acting as a consultant for the proposed major restoration works there.

Dr Brittain-Catlin explained: "Pugin had an irreversible effect on architecture and design at a lot of levels. First of all, he offered architects of the 1840s a completely new approach to design.

MASTER: Augustus Pugin

"Young architects were bored by Georgian architecture, which was monotonous and repetitive, and worst of all unable to deal with new building challenges such as railway stations or large, complicated public buildings. The gothic revival was about taking them back to addressing the basic problems of construction and design and starting afresh.

"The gothic revival coincided with a great period of church building for all the religious denominations in England and across the English-speaking world. Pugin showed architects how to design churches that looked like dignified, solid buildings for worship in contrast to recent cheap structures. He revived the ancient crafts of metalwork, stained glass and tilemaking, and is directly or indirectly responsible for how many town and village churches look today. All these things changed the status of the architect from a draftsman or amateur designer to a professional with wide-ranging responsibilities.

"The building of the Palace of Westminster occupied Pugin for the last eight years of his life and he made many thousands of drawings for it. One of his last designs was for the Big Ben clock tower – the one structure that signifies British democracy across the world."

Around 1840 he had purchased land in Ramsgate and built not only a large home for himself, The Grange, but also the neighbouring St Augustine's Church.

BUILT: The Grange was built by Pugin in the Thanet seaside town

It is in the graveyard of the church that he is buried.

Dr Brittain-Catlin added: "The book includes chapters from leading international scholars on the impact of Pugin's work in Canada, the United States, Australia, the South Pacific, South America and even China, as well as in Europe.

"Pugin's architecture in Ramsgate has world importance. His house, church and presbytery, and his son Edward Pugin's monastery opposite, are centrepieces of the gothic revival which is increasingly appreciated across the globe.

"The Pugin Society, Thanet District Council, as well as the Landmark Trust, are bringing visitors to this beautiful late Georgian and early Victorian town.

"This book will be a lasting tribute not only to Pugin himself, but also to the many people who work so hard to celebrate his memory today."

Gothic Revival Worldwide: AWN Pugin's Global Influence is published by Leuven University Press.

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County gets a blue rinse as opposition disintegrates

Tom Pyman was at County Hall to get reaction and watch the results roll in on a dramatic day in local politics.

ELECTION: Conservative leader of the council Paul Carter

UKIP was "annihilated" by the Conservatives in a hugely one-sided Kent County Council election which left them without a single seat at County Hall.

It mirrored the national picture where the party failed to win representation on local authorities up and down the country.

Conservative MP for South Thanet, Craig Mackinlay, told KoS in the run up to Thursday's election that he believed there could be an "absolute wipeout" of his former party, which surprised everyone by winning 17 seats on the council four years ago.

Since then it has suffered something of an identity crisis post-referendum, with voters clearly struggling to see a purpose for Ukip after Britain voted to leave the European Union.

It was perhaps not overly surprising it failed to win seats in other areas of the county, but to end the election empty-handed in Thanet, in particular - a Ukip heartland in recent years, where it won control of its first district council in 2015 - was indicative of its growing decline in the minds of the electorate.

Indeed, party leader Paul Nuttall told members on a visit to Margate last month the area was "the heart of Ukip".

Its misery was compounded by the fact Thanet District Council leader Chris Wells was beaten not only by the Conservatives, who won the Cliftonville seat he was contesting, but also Labour's Aram Rawf - a former refugee who fled Saddam Hussein's Iraq - who finished second.

A comfortable Conservative victory was perhaps inevitable in a county as traditionally blue as Kent, but even Tory chiefs might have been surprised by the magnitude of the landslide - winning 67 of the council's 81 seats.

Conservative leader of the council Paul Carter admitted while he was confident of an increased majority, the magnitude of Ukip's plight was greater than expected.

"That has come as a surprise to many people," he told KoS.

"We expected the Ukip vote to collapse to some extent but we didn't expect to annihilate the Ukip representation on county councils up and down the country.

"This is at the very high end of expectation for us.

"All of my 81 candidates worked exceptionally hard and I send enormous thanks to all their friends, families and volunteers who supported them.

"We've run a very good, clean campaign and we've got an extraordinarily good result for the county council, building on our track record of delivering improved services with a lot less public money coming our way from central government."

As well as romping to a triumph in its heartlands in the west of the county, the Tories snatched back control of purple seats from Ukip in Swale and also booted out some high-profile Labour councillors, including the group's leader, Gordon Cowan, and deputy leader, Roger Truelove.

Labour won three seats on KCC in total, down from 13 in 2013, which is surely an indication of public perception of party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr Truelove wondered if, with a general election around the corner, voters would be less inclined to vote 'politically' in the local elections, instead focusing more on the quality of the local candidate than they perhaps would have done had Theresa May not called a snap vote for June 8.

But clearly the party's standing nationally has affected voters in Kent enough for it to lose 10 seats and Cllr Carter admitted he had an element of sympathy for those Labour candidates who will no longer be representing constituents over the coming four years.

"We've lost some big personalities," he said.

"We celebrate our success but we do feel for our opponents who have given very long and loyal service to the authority in delivering a very strong and fair opposition over the years and I hope that continues because we need a strong opposition.

"Even though the opposition numbers may be limited, I can assure you the leader of the Liberal Democrats Trudy Dean is a very experienced and very sharp politician.

"We hope they provide the right checks and balance and scrutiny of the big decisions we make and support this county council which has a very proud history to continue to go in the right direction.

"We have collective responsibility on the big decisions."

The polls suggest a similarly comfortable victory for the Tories when we return to the polling booths next month, but while Cllr Carter has maximum faith in the prime minister, who he says has convinced a lot of voters on Kent doorsteps in recent weeks, the party cannot afford to take anything for granted.

"The biggest impact of all in local government elections as it has been for many years is the standing of the national party and the policies they're putting forward," he said.

"It's quite clear from results in local elections up and down the country that Theresa May is really connecting with her message, not just with regards to Brexit, but also for helping to support a country that is here to support all of our communities and our residents.

"I always say five weeks is a long time in politics so complacency is a concern and a worry but this is a very good indicator of good things to come for the Conservatives in the general election."

OPPONENTS LEFT HIGH AND DRY

THE Liberal Democrats are back as the main party of opposition on Kent County Council following a disastrous election for Ukip and Labour.

Traditionally strong in Maidstone, the yellow party won three seats in the county town as well as another in nearby Malling Central, defended by group leader Trudy Dean.

It also claimed victories in Ashford East and Canterbury City South to take seven seats in total, ahead of Labour's five and one each for the Greens and Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association.

A resurgence for the Lib Dems - obliterated both nationally and locally after entering a coalition with the Conservatives in 2010 - has been predicted by many, particularly with those who voted to remain in last year's European Union referendum.

And with Ukip struggling to convince voters it has a real purpose post-Brexit, and Jeremy Corbyn appearing to alienate the centre-left floating voter, something of a gap has opened up for Tim Farron's party, who told KoS last year he was confident of making up ground in Kent ahead of this election.

However, one has to wonder how healthy it can be to have a local authority so heavily dominated by one party over the next four years, with the main party of opposition not even winning 10 per cent of the seats up for grabs.

Though Conservative leader of the council Paul Carter told KoS it was more a question of the quality of the politicians involved in challenging the Conservatives, rather than necessarily the quantity.

''Strong leadership in the opposition parties is absolutely key, regardless of the number of seats,'' he said.

''We've been challenged by Labour, Ukip and Liberal Democrat groups on the council and our big decisions will be scrutinised again.''

The first full council meeting between the new selection of councillors at County Hall is scheduled for Thursday, May 25.

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Larry Krause (Cons) 971

ASHFORD RURAL EAST
Clair Bell (Cons) 2,621
Stuart Dove (Lib Dem) 686
Lyn Martyn (Labour) 429
Geoff Meaden (Green) 350
Pat Purnell (Ukip) 269

ASHFORD RURAL SOUTH
Mike Angell (Cons) 2,405
Chris Grayling (Lib Dem) 455
Lian Macpherson (Ukip) 321
Marilyn Sansom (Green) 161
Vivien Wheatley (Labour) 523

ASHFORD RURAL WEST
Sally Gathern (Labour) 439
Clare Hardwick (Lib Dem) 579
Hilary Jones (Green) 283
Charlie Simkins (Cons) 2,780
Norman Taylor (Ukip) 349

ASHFORD SOUTH
Dara Farrell (Labour) 1,022
James Galloway (Lib Dem) 312
Ryan Macpherson (Ukip) 727
David Robey (Cons) 966
Claire Wallington (Green) 146

SWALE

FAVERSHAM
Antony Hook (Lib Dem) . 2,714
Peter Hutchinson (Green) 261
Christine Palmer (Ukip) 243
Trevor Payne (Labour) 863
David Simmons (Cons) 2,218

SWALE WEST
Mike Baldock (Ukip) 2,040
Tim Valentine (Green) 120
Mike Whiting (Cons) 2,159
Marc Wilson (Lib Dem) 228
Tony Winckless (Labour) 495

SITTINGBOURNE NORTH
Tony Clark (Lib Dem) 330
Sue Gent (Cons) 1,526
Jim Hall (Ukip) 639
Huw Jones (Green) 72
Ghlin Whelan (Labour) 1,195

SITTINGBOURNE SOUTH
Gareth Arnold (Lib Dem) 188
Lee Burgess (Ukip) 527
Jonathan Grace (Green) 76
Roger Truelove (Labour) .. 1,955
John Wright (Cons) 1,972

SWALE EAST
Andrew Bowles (Cons) 2,597
Alastair Gould (Green) 367
Richard Palmer (Ukip) 717
Frances Rehal (Labour) 624
Eddie Thomas (Lib Dem) 500

SHEPPEY
Richard Bishop (Green) 337
Andy Booth (Cons) 3,093
Richard Darby (Ukip) 1,485
Angela Harrison (Labour) . 1,774
Dru Hopkins (Green) 201
Elliott Jayes (Ind) 593
Mini Nissanga (Ukip) 998
Ken Pugh (Cons) 3,009
Gill Smith (Labour) 1,291
David Spurling (Lib Dem) 175
Mike Walters (Ind) 144
Mad Mike Young (Monster) 339

DARTFORD

DARTFORD EAST
Penny Cole (Cons) 1,914
Ashley MacTaggart (Lib Dem) 497
Catherine Stafford (Labour) 696

DARTFORD NORTH EAST
Ronald Ball (BNP) 61
Andrew Blatchford (Green) 163
Dave Butler (Cons) 1,611
Ben Fryer (Ukip) 442
Tom Maddison (Labour & Co-op) 1,523

SWANSCOMBE & GREENHITHE
Peter Harman (Swanscombe & Greenhithe Residents' Association) 1,093
Keith Kelly (Cons) 634
Linda Moore (Ukip) 208
Claire Pearce (Labour) 634

DARTFORD WEST
Michael Cope (BNP) 36
Sacha Gosine (Labour) 1,355
Jim Moore (Ukip) 442
Jan Ozog (Cons) 2,077
Ashley Wassal (Lib Dem) 317

DARTFORD RURAL
Ivan Burch (Ukip) 439
Mandy Garford, (Labour) 680
Jeremy Kite (Cons) 1,313
Edward Waite (Lib Dem) 165

WILMINGTON
Ann Allen (Cons) 2,610
Roger Doucy (Ukip) 497
Joshua Jones (Labour & Co-op) 481
Caroline Watkinson (Lib Dem) 195

DOVER

DEAL AND WALMER
Trevor Bond (Cons) 3,969
Will Darlington (Lib Dem) 779
Mike Eddy (Labour) 2,860
Sylvia Hanael (Ukip) 699
Graham Lane (Ukip) 497
John Lonsdale (Green) 491
Derek Murphy (Cons) 3,544
Eileen Rowbotham (Labour) 2,751
Christopher Tough (Ind) 179
John Trickey (Lib Dem) 610

DOVER NORTH
Nick Fox (Green) 311
Steve Manion (Cons) 2,074
Tim Turner (Ukip) 303
Charles Woodgate (Labour) 1,173

DOVER TOWN
Pauline Beresford (Cons) 2,832
Adrian Briggs (Lib Dem) 394
Pamela Brivio (Labour) 2,436
Nigel Collor (Cons) 2,681
Gordon Cowan (Labour) 1,989
Ben Glayzer (Ukip) 979
Carolyn Hughes (Lib Dem) 365
Georgette Rapley (Ukip) 845
Beccy Sawbridge (Green) 443

DOVER WEST
Jim Caple (Lib Dem) 299
Sarah Gleave (Green) 182
Geoffrey Lymer (Cons) 2,589
Peter McDermott (Ukip) 421
Miriam Wood (Labour) 766

SANDWICH
Sue Chandler (Cons) 2,868
Lesley Ede (Ukip) 287
David Pestell (Labour) 831
Wendy Scott (Lib Dem) 442
Aidan Shanks (Green) 251

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GRAVESHAM

GRAVESHAM RURAL
Doug Christie (Labour) 740
John Death (Lib Dem) 440
Bryan Sweetland (Cons) 3,975
Ryan Waters (Ukip) 407

NORTHFLEET AND GRAVESEND WEST
David Beattie (Ukip) 883
Conrad Broadley (Cons) 3,390
Tan Dhesi (Labour) 3,786
Emmanuel Feyisetan (Ukip) 649
Gary Harding (Cons) 3,149
Erin Johnson (Green) 374
Mark Marsh (Lib Dem) 365
Ruiha Smalley (Green) 218
Lauren Sullivan (Labour) .. 3,621
Sharan Virk (Lib Dem) 386

GRAVESEND EAST
Tina Brooker (Ukip) 1,182
Colin Caller (Labour) 2,784
Mason Cole (Lib Dem) 267
Marna Gilligan (Green) 310
Diane Marsh (Cons) 3,708
Lyn Milner (Labour) 2,730
Alan Ridgers (Cons) 3,332
James Willis (Lib Dem) 378
Martin Wilson (Green) 385

MAIDSTONE

MAIDSTONE CENTRAL
Keith Adkinson (Labour) 1,363
Alan Bartlett (Cons) 2,746
Rob Bird (Lib Dem) 3,140
Dan Daley (Lib Dem) 3,540
Donna Greenan (Green) 444
Paul Harper (Labour) 1,319
Graham Jarvis (Cons) 2,246
Stuart Jeffery (Green) 470
Pamela Watts (Ukip) 647

MAIDSTONE NORTH EAST
Belinda Bassett (Green) 148
Joanna Burns (Labour) 332
Ian Chittenden (Lib Dem) 2,232
Nick Goddard (Ukip) 310
Cheryl Taylor Maggio (Cons) 1,411

MAIDSTONE RURAL EAST
Derek Eagle (Green) 201
Mark McGiffin (Ukip) 472
Malcolm McKay (Labour) 397
Shellina Prendergast (Cons) 3,482
Paul Wilby (Lib Dem) 458

MAIDSTONE RURAL NORTH
Paul Carter (Cons) 3,042
Martin Cox (Lib Dem) 530
Tim Licence (Labour) 441
Gordon Newton (Ukip) 408
Ciaran Oliver (Green) 197

MAIDSTONE RURAL SOUTH
Eric Hotson (Cons) 2,912
Caroline Jessel (Green) 356
Derek Mortimer (Lib Dem) 610
Stella Randall (Labour) 398

MAIDSTONE RURAL WEST
Richard Coates (Labour) 259
Martin Lack (Ukip) 348
Brian Mortimer (Lib Dem) 1,716
Paulina Stockwell (Cons) 2,351
Geoffrey Wilkinson (Green) 140

MAIDSTONE SOUTH
Gary Butler (Ind) 46
Brian Clark (Lib Dem) 1,561
Patrick Coates (Labour) 371
Paul Cooper (Cons) 1,872
Michael Hogg (Ukip) 418
Yolande Kenward (Ind) 82
Ian McDonald (Green) 101

MAIDSTONE SOUTH EAST
Steven Cheeseman (Green) 107
Gary Cooke (Cons) 1,496
David Naghi (Lib Dem) 247
Eddie Powell (Ukip) 543
Dan Wilkinson (Labour) 496

SEVENOAKS

SEVENOAKS NORTH & DARENT VALLEY
Graham Cushway (Ukip) 374
Philip Dodd (Green) 463
Roger Gough (Cons) 3,289
Theo Michael (Labour) 502
Krish Shanmuganathan (Lib Dem) 476

SEVENOAKS RURAL NORTH EAST
David Brazier (Cons) 3,371
Mark Lindop (Green) 435
Lucas Pearce (Labour) 539

SEVENOAKS RURAL SOUTH
Amelie Boleyn (Green) 280
Alan Damodaran (Ind) 72
Peter Lake (Cons) 2,749
James Parish (Labour) 354
Richard Streatfeild (Lib Dem) 878

SEVENOAKS TOWN
Tony Clayton (Lib Dem) 2,046
Margaret Crabtree (Cons) 2,483
Michael Hogg (Labour) 346
Gerald O'Brien (Ukip) 293

SEVENOAKS WEST
Merilyn Canet (Lib Dem) 719
Nicholas Chard (Cons) 3,025
Neil Proudfoot (Labour) 432
Chris Stewart (Ukip) 301
Sarah White (Green) 298

SHEPWAY

CHERITON, SANDGATE & HYTHE EAST
Paul Bingham (Labour) 506
Ross Carter (Green) 856
Neil Jones (Ukip) 398
Rory Love (Cons) 2,172
Tim Prater (Lib Dem) 1,217

ELHAM VALLEY
Susan Carey (Cons) 2,706
Ross Clark (Lib Dem) 515
Stephen Priestley (Ukip) 639
Aaron Roche (Labour) 513
Karen White (Green) 616

FOLKESTONE EAST
Lynne Beaumont (Lib Dem) 542
Arran Harvey (Labour) 831
Max Hess (Socialist) 48
Mary Lawes (Ukip) 660
Dick Pascoe (Cons) 1,153

FOLKESTONE WEST
Laura Davison (Labour) 841
Gary Fuller (Lib Dems) 521
Stephen Jardine (Ukip) 412
David Monk (Cons) 1,834
Bryan Rylands (Ind) 191
Rebecca Shoob (Green) 325
Andy Thomas (Socialist) 23

HYTHE WEST
Christopher Deane (Labour) 340
Neil Matthews (Lib Dem) 280
Ian Meyers (Ukip) 493
David Owen (Cons) 2,044
Martin Whybrow (Green) 2,234

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CANTERBURY

CANTERBURY CITY NORTH
Mike Bland (Labour) 1,198
Graham Gibbens (Cons) 1,665
Andrew Palmer (Lib Dem) 1,137
Henry Stanton (Green) 479
Richard West (Ukip) 193

HERNE BAY EAST
Ann Anderson (Lib Dem) 506
Jon Beer (Labour) 893
Nick Bond (Ukip) 580
Andrew Cook (Cons) 2,399

CANTERBURY SOUTH
Jean Butcher (Labour) 655
Michael Northey (Cons) 2,151
Michael Sole (Lib Dem) 1,788
Frankie-Rose Taylor (Green) 285

CANTERBURY CITY SOUTH
Joe Egerton (Cons) 1,071
Ida Linfield (Lib Dem Focus Team) 1,863
Pat Marsh (Green) 313
Carol Riley (Ukip) 189
Simon Warley (Labour) 1,087

CANTERBURY NORTH
Trevor Dockwray (Ukip) 240
Andrew Goatly (Green) 287
Ben Hickman (Labour) 700
Daniel Prevett (Lib Dem) 699
John Simmonds (Cons) 2,321

HERNE VILLAGE AND STURRY
Lynn Faux Bowyer (Labour) ... 769
Alan Marsh (Cons) 2,637
Mick O'Brien (Ukip) 391
Nathan Tough (Green) 189
Graham Wood (Lib Dem) 403

WHITSTABLE WEST
Mark Dance (Cons) 2,225
Rachel Goodwin (Labour) 1,736
David Mummery (Lib Dems) . 557
Richard Riley (Ukip) 414
Alex Stevens (Green) 364

TONBRIDGE

MALLING CENTRAL
Helen Brown (Ukip) 182
Trudy Dean (Lib Dem) 2,576
Dougie Dick (Cons) 1,535
Sarah Palmer (Labour) 239

MALLING NORTH
Sarah Hohler (Cons) 2,512
Wayne Mallard (Labour) 763
Howard Porter (Green) 158
Richard Selkirk (Lib Dem) 411

MALLING NORTH EAST
Lola Ayeni (Labour) 594
Peter Homewood (Cons) 3,208
Steve Jackson (Green) 217
Darren Nicholls (Lib Dem) 620

MALLING RURAL EAST
Matthew Balfour (Cons) 3,230
Jill Darby (Green) 450
Nicola Gibb (Lib Dem) 663

MALLING WEST
Kathleen Garlick (Labour) 336
Mike Jerrom (Ukip) 311
Richard Mountford (Green) 312
Harry Rayner (Cons) 3,208
Nicholas Stapleton (Lib Dem) 460

TONBRIDGE
David Allen (Ukip) 766
Mary Arigho (Labour) 1,209
Garry Bridge (Lib Dem) 1,146
April Clark (Green) 1,028
Mark Hood (Green) 923
Frances Hoskins (Lib Dem) 1,413
Colin Hussey (Ukip) 723
Richard Long (Cons) 4,464
Sacha Marten (Labour) 1,009
Michael Payne (Cons) 4,647

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

CRANBROOK
Clare Bishop (Lib Dem) 647
Ian Carvell (Labour) 306
Sean Holden (Cons) 2,932
Nancy Warne (Ind) 988

TUNBRIDGE WELLS SOUTH
Lorna Blackmore (Labour) 573
Andrew Hickey (Lib Dem) 888
John Hurst (Green) 215
Naz Mian (Ukip) 219
Catherine Rankin (Cons) 2,716
Celine Thomas (WEP) 474

TUNBRIDGE WELLS NORTH
Martin Betts (Labour) 1,248
Anthony Hoskin (Green) 128
Marguerita Morton (Lib Dem) 1,172
William O'Shea (Ukip) 215
Peter Oakford (Cons) 2,017

TUNBRIDGE WELLS RURAL
Trevor Bisdee (Green) 219
Tom Deacon (Lib Dem) 475
Sarah Hamilton (Cons) 2,928
Raymond Moon (Labour) 600
Colin Nicholson (Ukip) 266

TUNBRIDGE WELLS EAST
Paul Barrington-King (Cons) . 1,953
Terry Cload (Ind) 850
Christopher Hoare (Ukip) 429
Allen Lear (Lib Dem) 912
Tim Rich (Labour) 567

TUNBRIDGE WELLS WEST
Russell Bishop (Ukip) 259
Alex Britcher (Labour) 718
Alan Bullion (Lib Dem) 884
David Holton (Green) 350
James McInroy (Cons) 2,720

THANET

MARGATE
Kerry Boyd (Cons) 1,187
John Finnegan (Lib Dem) 169
Gary Hillman (Ukip) 632
Bernard Kirkham (Green) 133
Barry Lewis (Labour) 1,286
Pip Rees (Ind) 96

BIRCHINGTON AND RURAL
Suzanne Brimm (Ukip) 1,418
Angie Curwen (Lib Dem) 1,076
Emma Dawson (Cons) 4,529
Peter Evans (Ukip) 1,141
Ken Gregory (Cons) 4,103
Martyn Pennington (Lib Dem) 819
Natasha Ransom (Green) 499
Lynda Robinson (Labour) 1,455
Seamus Yener (Labour) 1,115

BROADSTAIRS
Rosalind Binks (Cons) 3,155
William Hewer (Lib Dem) 379
Terry Macdonald (Green) 196
Stuart McCann (Labour) 1,072
Zita Wiltshire (Ukip) 580

CLIFTONVILLE
Matthew Brown (Lib Dem) 246
David Davidge (Ind) 163
Lesley Game (Cons) 2,679
Aram Rawf (Labour) 965
Chris Wells (Ukip) 648
Mike White (Green) 129

RAMSGATE
Raushan Ara (Labour) 3,145
Karen Constantine (Labour) 3,200
Stefan Costen (Ind) 181
Ian Driver (Ind) 505
Lin Fairbrass (Ukip) 1,746
Colin Grostate (Ind) 485
Catherine Hewer (Lib Dem) 472
Paul Messenger (Cons) 3,168
Marc Rattigan (Cons) 2,945
Trevor Shonk (Ukip) 1,846
Jordan Williams (Lib Dem) 479

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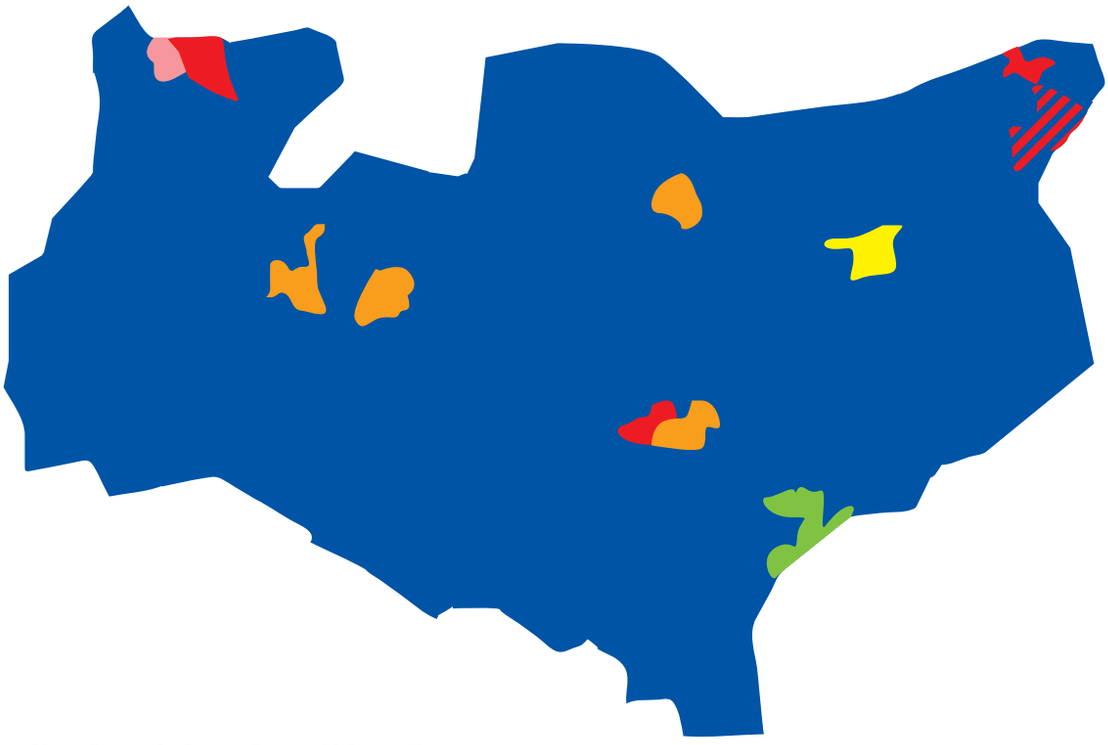

SEAT BY PARTY

CONSERVATIVE	67
LIB DEM	6
LABOUR	5
GREEN PARTY	1
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT FOCUS TEAM	1
GREENHITHE & SWANSCOMBE RESIDENTS' ASSOCATION	1
BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY	0
INDEPENDENT	0
LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE PARTY	0
SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN	0
MONSTER	0
UKIP	0
WOMEN'S EQUALITY PARTY	0

67 Number of elected candidates by party

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LAUGHS: Ben Roddy and Damian Williams in hit comedy Don't Dress for Dinner, which is at the Marlowe this Monday and Tuesday

Dame Ben plays for laughs as hit comedy hits Marlowe

Chris Britcher speaks to Ben Roddy - best known as theatre's panto big-hitter

FOR the thousands of pantomime fans that flock to the Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury each year for its festive slapstick extravaganza, one man more than any other has emerged as worthy of the ticket price alone.

Replacing the legendary Dave Lee as the pantomime dame in the production was never going to be easy, but Ben Roddy has pulled off the near impossible and established himself on a par with the late star.

But while it would be fun to assume he spends his life wearing flambouyant dresses while packing an enormous bossom, the reality is the man behind the 'bloke in a dress' is an accomplished actor who is currently adding another string to his bow by bringing a hit comedy he has co-produced to the Marlowe this week.

Don't Dress For Dinner proved a big hit when it was staged in Eastbourne last summer, and is now on what Roddy describes as a "two-month muscular tour" of regional theatres.

And it's going down a storm after an opening week in Swansea.

Starring Roddy alongside Olivier Award-winning actress Sara Crowe, best known for her roles in everything from EastEnders to Four Weddings and Funeral, and Damian Williams, who impressed in the title role in the stage production of Being Tommy Cooper, the fast-packed farce is penned by Marc Camoletti and enjoyed six years on London's West End.

Explains Roddy: "It's a genuinely funny play. Sara has come on board for this run and she's brilliant. She has great comedy heritage and is fantastic."

Long-time chums with Damian Williams, the production has allowed Roddy to wear another hat rather than just that of actor.

"In acting there's no career path," he explains, "most professions you start at the bottom and you work your way to the top. Acting is more ebb and flow – so naturally you want a little self determination when you get older.

"I've always worked so this isn't a case of making a job for myself. But there is a case of wanting to work with people you get on with.

"There are jobs I want to do and people I want to work with, so that allows me to do that."

Having moved with wife Kate - who works for panto producers Evolution - and their five-year-old son Stan to Canterbury five years ago, he admits to being somewhat rushed off his feet this year.

His panto runs have allowed him to become good friends with TV and radio presenter Stephen Mulhern and Roddy will join him on his summer tour this year again. "I play his comedy side-kick which is a role not unfamiliar to those who have seen us in panto together," he quips.

He's also about to start filming British comedy Patrick. While coy on the details, the movie, produced by Mandie Fletcher - who produced Absolutely Fabulous: The Movie, in which Roddy also had a role - is set to star Jennifer Saunders and her daughter Beattie Edmondson.

Then, of course, it's back to the Marlowe for Peter Pan.

• Don't Dress for Dinner is at the Marlowe on Monday (May 9) and Tuesday. Tickets available at marlowetheatre.com and on the door.

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JOY happily married, bi curious, blonde hair, blue eyes, big boobs, seeks someone to join in a bit of bedroom fun! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426845**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3010 Box: 409715**

ANNE blonde hair, blue eyes, seeks males for no strings adult fun! Call and leave a number for me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426843**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3018 Box: 413399**

MATURE lady 70s, various interests but a bit lonely, hoping to meet a gent to cheer me up, come on, we can have some fun together. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426349**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. PIs call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice, I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3006 Box 422365**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3022 Box 421375**

GENTS, please call me if you are looking to meet a kind sincere lady for nights at the theatre, socialising etc. You can call or text me. I promise to reply, I'm very genuine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426345**

JACKIE is 54yrs and an attractive easygoing brunette, she's hoping to meet a similar minded chap for some fun, dates, chats, text or call me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426343**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3034 Box 425979**

ATTRACTIVE blonde lady, 54yrs, loyal, romantic and solvent hoping to meet a gent with GSOH for romance, sensual times and more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426341**

JASMINE, 34yrs, non smoking first time dater! Easy going, attractive and hard working. Due to work commitments I'm looking for a no strings companion any age. Looks unimportant must have GSOH. **Tel: 0906 515 3014 Box 426201**

KAREN, 52yrs, attractive with GSOH, very active and outgoing. If you are 40+ give me a call, lets have a chat, maybe meet up. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426339**

Customer support
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or email us at **support@jmediauk.co.uk**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3030 Box 426205**

LADY, 70, 5ft6, divorced, blonde hair, brown eyes, friendly, lives in the Kent area, likes walking, holidays, WLTM somebody for friendship in the local area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426193**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3042 Box 426851**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425327**

PIA, Asian lady, 57yrs, very caring and a little subservient and quiet. I am a good cook and loyal friend. PIs text me if you are kind man 55+ **Text Only. Mailbox 4013378**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425341**

NATALIA, black beauty! I am late 50s but still fit with a good figure and lovely skin and eyes. I would like to meet a nice white gentleman, older than myself for chats, maybe more. **Text Only. Mailbox 4107799**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425933**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425931**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425929**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425927**

LIVELY 53-year-old female, young in mind, wants discreet fun, loves gardening, dancing music etc and more. **Text only. Mailbox: 5763284**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424491**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424781**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424675**

SARAH, mature feminine lady, kind caring but still has a sensual side, hoping to meet like minded, confident, non smoking gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424777**

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received. mydate24

MALE divorced, 6ft, well built, seeking fun time girl for good times. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 412717**

HARRY 50, ex soldier, 6ft, well built, seeking lady to wine and dine. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 417015**

50YR old divorced white male, passionate, strong, seeking caring lady for romantic, loving relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 418641**

BARRY, 50, 6ft 4ins, well built, divorced gent, looking to date calm and kind lovely lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421195**

GUY, 50, 6ft tall, calm and kind, good company, seeking lovely lady for good times and fun and loving. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425369**

JERRY, 66, brown hair, brown eyes, recently widowed, love to walk my dog, WLTM compatible lady for companionship and to see where things go. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426387**

LOCAL man, seeks lady for friendship possibly more, for romantic dates and good times together, hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426195**

HANDSOME male, mid 40s, dark hair, hazel eyes, wishes to meet appropriate female for fun, friendship and perhaps more, please get in touch if interested. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422587**

MALE, 70s, would like to meet slim lady 60 plus. **Text only. Mailbox: 4505135**

BRUNETTE lady, 70, slim, sophisticated, size 10, kind of like Helen Mirren as a brunette, lives near Tunbridge Wells, WLTM a genuine, hopefully family oriented gentleman, for genuine friendship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424877**

SUE, genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424673**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425339**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425337**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425325**

MALE, 55, looking for no strings attached friendship, with a lady 60-70, any status. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426133**

MALE, 6ft, brown hair and blue eyes, warm and understanding, likes dining out and cosy nights in, lots of fun, friendship and holidays. Looking for a lady over 48. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426057**

EASYGOING male, 49, 6ft, well built, seeks female to wine/dine and have fun times with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 401401**

CARING sociable, GSOH, slim, attractive, married gent, 67, feels discarded and lonely, seeks likewise lady 60+ for trips out, dining etc. **Text only. Mailbox: 5082918**

SIX foot guy, mature, looking for someone special to spend some quality time with. Please leave me a message I would love to hear from you! **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 420163**

PROFESSIONAL gentleman, 64, widowed, own house, loves holidays abroad, reading, eating out, eating in and shows, WLTM a lady of similar age to share interests and happy times together hopefully leading to lasting relationship. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425787**

HELLO, mature gentleman looking for a lady who is caring, likes holidays, karaoke, meals out, country walks and cinema. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425401**

MARK 48, slim, fit, GSOH, looking for loyal partner for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424679**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425331**

GENUINE gentleman, family minded, kind, generous seeks lady 55-75 for wining, dining and wine and laughter. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425329**

NICE looking 55 year old male WLTM sincere lady, any age, for friendship, outings, holidays abroad etc. Love the sun. **Text only. Mailbox: 4922399**

DENTAL practitioner, 44, 6ft, slim, athletic build, thick dark hair, blue eyes, loves sports, seeks slim feminine sporty lady. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425087**

EDWARD, 77, looking for a companion South East area of Kent, for holidays, days out, social events, and lots more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 423039**

TALL, lively old boy, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks tactile lady for company and jolly jaunts. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 425021**

MALE, 58, wishes to meet attractive female, into music, live bands, cinema and some sports, for nights out socialising and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424979**

HI I'm Darren, down to earth guy, lives in Kent, likes Marbaia, looking for someone special to meet and have a laugh with. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424951**

GARETH handsome 40's pilot, strong tall build, seeks daytime discreet passion with lady 30-65. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 414421**

NICK, mature male, builder, tattoos, plenty of money, looking for discreet meets, no stings in the Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424787**

MALE 50 seeks mature, home loving lady, 60 plus who enjoys cosy nights in. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424683**

RETIRED, intelligent, Broadstairs widower, GSOH, medium height and build, seeks slim lady for friendship and companionship initially. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424697**

59YR old male, likes country walks, pub lunches, seeks lady for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424685**

MARTIN trustworthy, warm hearted, loving, reliable male, 45, 6ft, medium build, young at heart, GSOH, seeks female, 50-60 for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424681**

CARING 55yr old male, widower, 6ft 3ins, WLTM lady, 40-55 for fun and laughter, maybe happy ever after. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424677**

COLIN, 56, 6ft, medium build, clean and tidy with a tidy beard, I'm after some TLC with no strings adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422359**

ANDY, tall attractive male, looking for a naughty female, for fun with no strings attached. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424295**

MALE, 52, quiet nature, likes coastal walks, cinema, reading, WLTM lady for friendship and maybe romance. East Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424211**

RICHARD, 64, n/s, from Kent, medium build, clean shaven, likes classic cars, days out, meals out, boot fares, most things, would like to meet a lady for company and to share each others interests. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 424207**

LIVELY old boy, OHAC, near sea in Folkestone, into red wine, garlic and Radio 3, seeks lady companion/lover, 58-68 yo. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 422621**

Gay Seeking

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GAY guy, medium build, likes outdoors, DIY, seeking slim, N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 403267**

EASY going guy, 68, likes walks, books, seeks N/S guy for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 411413**

ROB, bi-curious male, 55, seeks likeminded male, crossdresser/TV. Must be discreet. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 426287**

ROBBIE, 54, reasonably fit, bi-curious, I'm very inexperienced and would like to meet a CD or TV preferably but not essential for a bit of fun. Kent area. **Tel No: 0906 515 7112 Box No: 421357**

Friends

FEMALE seeking genuine straight female for daytrips, out to meet socially for lunch/coffee. **Text only to Mailbox No:4748240**

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LeeFest: The Neverland adds more talent to summer line-up

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

MUSIC festival LeeFest: The Neverland has announced a string of additional performers for the three-day event near Tunbridge Wells.

The 5,000-capacity festival, which is being headlined by Jake Bugg, Annie Mac and Kate Tempest, takes place at John Darlings Farm, over the weekend of August 10-12.

And now organisers have added Jungle, Percolate, Regression Sessions, Good Life and non-music partners such as Sounds Familiar Quiz, Apothecary Cabaret, The Shift, Real Debate Club and Almond Blossom Yoga.

Critically acclaimed Jungle will be bringing their brand new concept Jungle Presents to The Neverland. They will be taking over Wonderland's Beach Stage with a lineup of their favourite acts including Moxie and Makeness.

Finishing off the night with a DJ set by the hosts, Jungle's eclectic selection is certain to provide a stand-out Neverland moment.

PARTY: Festival promises something for everyone as it kicks on for three days of fun on August 10.

Regression Sessions have become synonymous with creating shows that allow you to express your inner-child, complete with ball pits, but teamed with crowd favourites from house, garage, drum and bass, soul and disco. At LeeFest, these will play host to Rudimental protege Kidnap Kid, plus others.

LeeFest is also set to welcome Good Life. They've fast made a name for themselves with outlandish themes and elaborate costumes thanks to their touring show that takes place all across the UK.

London promoter powerhouse Percolate are known for their parties and programming. They have a habit of shining a light on new talent before they become big names, and at LeeFest they will be showcasing their intimate party style soundtracked by emotive ambient duo Maribou State, shapeshifting DJ/producer/cartoonist Mr Scruff, and Percolate's hard working residents Krywald & Farrer.

The festival has grown over the years and after taking a year out in 2015 returned in style in 2016 to celebrate its tenth anniversary.

Tickets, costing £109 for the weekend, are on sale now via leefest.org.

Kemp's Gold-en tales

SPANDAU Ballet turned actor Martin Kemp is hosting an evening of star-studded tales at Maidstone's Hazlitt Theatre on May 19.

For tickets visit parkwood-theatres.co.uk/Hazlitt-Theatre

Bowls club's open days

BEXLEYHEATH and Barnehurst Bowls Club is offering people a chance to have a free session playing the sport in a bid to gain members.

Open day sessions will be held at the club in Russell Park, Long Lane on May 13, 14, and 15.

For more information email bbbowlsclub@gmail.com.

CBeebies' show on stage

TV's Phil Gallagher is bringing CBeebies' Mister Maker to Bromley's Churchill Theatre and Margate's Winter Gardens.

For tickets and dates visit churchilltheatre.co.uk or margatewintergardens.com

Dancers' daring routines

THE Northern School of Contemporary Dance's touring troop, Verve, will be performing at Tunbridge Wells' Trinity Theatre on May 12.

The group of 11 will be performing four physically daring dance routines, one of which was choreographed by James Cousins.

For tickets visit trinitytheatre.net.

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All or Nothing the musical

ALL of Nothing, a musical based on mod band Small Faces, is coming to the Orchard Theatre and Churchill Theatre.

For dates and tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk and churchilltheatre.co.uk

Push the boat out sailing

CONNINGBROOK Lakes Sailing, Ashford, are offering sailing taster sessions on May 14 as part of a nationwide initiative to get people involved in the sport.

The sessions are open to those who are new to the sport, or looking to get back in the water.

To book visit cinqueportssailing.org/

Blooming demonstration

AWARD-winning garden designer Ann-Marie Powell visited Homebase in Orpington, on Monday, to give a live demonstration, showing the public how to create their 'garden goals' at home.

Welcome to the 60s Kent

HAIRSPRAY, the musical, is back just as big, bold, and beautiful as ever, and this time it's visiting Dartford's Orchard Theatre from August 28 to September 9 and Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre from May 8 to 12 2018.

For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or marlowetheatre.co.uk

Review: Is Russell still a brand worth listening to?

By Chris Britcher
chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

RUSSELL Brand is perhaps the finest example of a Marmite character in the world of entertainment - loved and loathed in equal measure.

Yet he is also one of the most compelling, courtesy of a mountain of charisma, a large dollop of intelligence, and whilst packing an ego the size of a house, he has the ability to off-set that with a heavy dose of self-deprecation..

And for a man who could fill arena-size venues, the prospect of him performing in regional theatres proved far too much of a temptation for many who snapped up tickets for his show at the Margate Winter Gardens.

For them, was a nigh-on two hour show of high-paced, quick-witted, expletive-heavy entertainment.

Brand has the frankly unnerving ability to be likeable at all times.

The Re:Birth tour has, at its heart, his journey to parenthood and the responsibilities which come with it, but it is a mere theme and there's plenty of all the regular topics you would expect from a man who has created as many headlines in recent years for his political commentary as his famous sexual appetite.

So we get lots of views on everything from tales of him meeting Donald Trump, to that famous interview ahead of the 2015 election with Ed Miliband. Nor is he afraid to drop in mentions of his short-lived marriage to the pop star Katy Perry.

But you don't want me to spoil the glorious ebb and flow of a show which rolls along at a frenetic pace and seems over no sooner had it begun.

For someone who has been hugely successful as more than just a comedian, he remains very much one of the people.

• **Re:Birth continues at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on May 29, and Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on September 20. For tickets visit marlowetheatre.co.uk or assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.**

VENUE: Winter Gardens was a sell-out for the show

STAR: And if you missed him, he's got more Kent show to come

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Spice up your life with Anjum's new cookbook

The cookery writer reveals her parents' dismay at her career path following release of I Love India...

WHEN Anjum Anand decided to give up a steady career in business to become a full-time foodie, her parents weren't so sure.

"They were horrified - they'd paid for my education, and they had encouraged me to make more of my life than be in the kitchen. They were supportive, but they weren't enthused by it," the cookery writer recalls.

After a few years' graft in professional kitchens, and the publication of a debut cookbook, Indian Every Day, when she was 25, Anand won her mum and dad over.

"They kept thinking, 'She'll come to her senses'. But then when my first book came out I think then they realised, 'Actually, this is great'," recalls Anand, now 45.

Anand's career change shouldn't have come as a big surprise though.

One of three children, growing up in London and Switzerland, she was "the only one who ever volunteered to go to the kitchen".

There, Anand developed her love of Indian cuisine.

"I loved cooking. I loved the craft of it, I loved the chemistry of it, how you take something which doesn't taste good and you add all these bits and you cook it and it tastes amazing," she says.

"I've always found it quite meditative, so I would go into the kitchen and do whatever I wanted to do, with friends or without friends."

PASSIONATE: Anjum Anand

Since Indian Every Day was published in 2003, she's gone on to land regular TV appearances, hosting the BBC series Indian Food Made Easy, and launch her own food range, The Spice Tailor.

She's been compared to 'domestic goddess' and fellow glossy-haired TV cook Nigella Lawson, over the years - something she takes "with a pinch of salt".

"I know there are some similarities, because she was on the cover of a magazine and my daughter looked at it when she was about two and said, 'Oh, Mum!'" recalls Anand.

"I think Nigella's so talented and articulate and a great TV presenter, she's fantastic."

Her eighth cookbook, I Love India, was recently published.

Inspired by her visits to India, the book has sections on street-side tiffin, coastal curries and comfort food.

"I travel to India a fair amount, and when I go, I try and taste new regional food - foods I haven't tasted before - or just get inspired to make a typical Indian dish but with British seasonal ingredients."

At home in London, Anand gets her daughter and son involved in the cooking process too, and makes sure they celebrate Indian traditions and festivals.

As for her parents? "Looking back on the last 15 years, they're really proud," she says with a smile. "And they're really happy for me that I am doing something I enjoy."

Writer tours big hits

AMERICAN singer/songwriter James House, who's penned hits for Tina Turner, is coming to Tunbridge Wells' Groombridge Palace on June 18, preceeding his latest solo album release.

James and his band will perform songs from his new album, Berwick St, plus his own past hits and the hits he's written for The Mavericks, Joe Bonamassa, and Rod Stewart.

For tickets visit ticketmaster.co.uk

Bike venture's funding

A £360,000 crowdfunding campaign for a leisure venture in Penshurst is launching for the public on Monday, May 8.

The public can donate to the fundraising initiative in exchange for a 10 per cent stake in the business, Kingdom.

With the money raised, the 13-acre woodland will be transformed into an off-road cycling route for all abilities.

Visit seedrs.com/kingdom1/sections/idea

Remembering Fred

STRICTLY stars Aljaz Skorjanec and Janette Manrara pay tribute to Fred Astaire in a theatre show, Remembering Fred at Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall on May 30.

Audiences will also hear from famous Fred fans, via videos, including Twiggy, Darcey Bussell, Don Black and Bruce Oldfield who will share stories of the screen icon.

For tickets visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.

Heck! Here's storytime

A mother who has penned her first children's book is coming to Gravesend next week.

Author Lucy Sands will be coming to Gravesend Library on Wednesday, May 10, to join in with the library's Rhyme Time event, then share new book Heck! Here's the Heron.

The event which starts at 11am, and entry is free.

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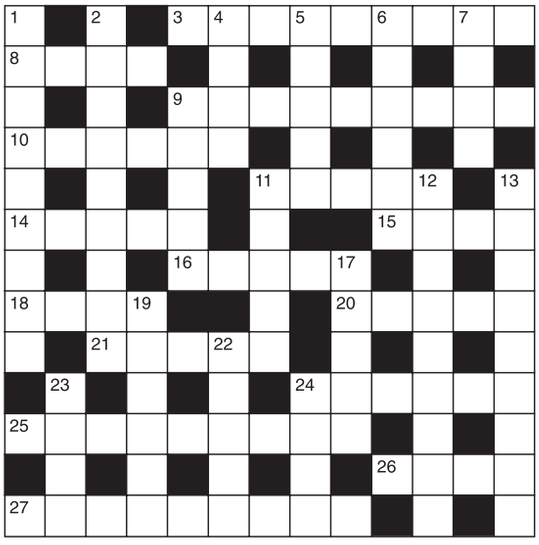


Quick

Across
3. Crisis (9)
8. Domesticated (4)
9. Eighty (9)
10. Assemble (6)
11. Category (5)
14. Dutiful (5)
15. Identical (4)
16. Hurl (5)
18. Woe! (4)
20. Lessen (5)
21. Slack (5)
24. Portray (6)
25. Postpone (5,4)
26. Couple (4)
27. Blizzard (9)

Down
1. Drama (9)
2. Passionate (9)
4. Heath (4)
5. Countryside (5)
6. Surplus (6)
7. Abrupt (4)
9. Banquet (5)
11. Arc (5)
12. Devilish (9)
13. Dining room (9)
17. Vacillate (5)
19. Sadness (6)
22. Brief (5)
23. Profit (4)
24. Expensive (4)

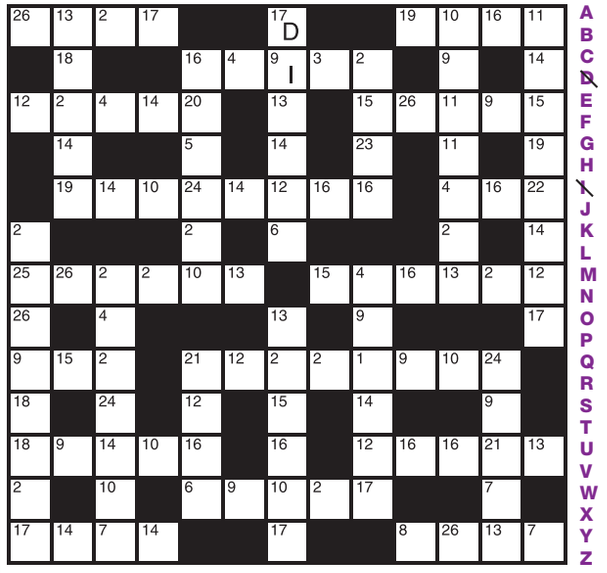
Cryptic

Across
3. One who is may not understand too much of a good thing (1,3,5)
8. Lois becomes a medium (4)
9. A reckoning that comes to nothing (9)
10. Mass-produced legislation? (3,3)
11. The Spanish get round the English girl (5)
14. A number thereabout (5)
15. Pronounced periods of enlightenment or stupefaction (4)
16. A noted drama (5)
18. Creatures having small feet with a point at each end (4)
20. Dark drink with plenty of body? (5)
21. Nears new gains (5)
24. Want to disguise hatred (6)
25. Look-out man? (9)
26. I can reform a Peruvian (4)
27. Parts of movements set to swing time (9)

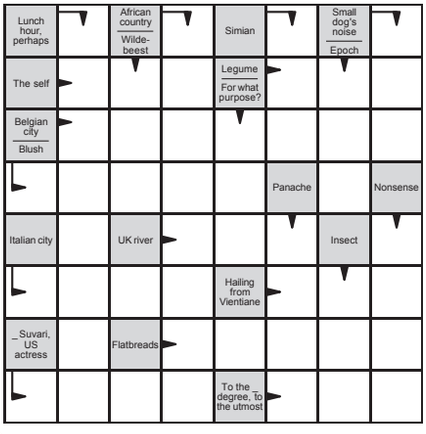
Down
1. Did something and was sent to prison (9)
2. In a way are able to give further details (9)
4. Whistle a hit? (4)
5. The up-and-down principle (5)
6. Acted evasively, being naturally guarded (6)
7. Brotherhood? (4)
9. It was meant to be decorative, but came to nothing (5)
11. Seven different levels (5)
12. I rub along, somehow, working hard (9)
13. Proceeded - to take the lead? (4,5)
17. One advantage of new seats (5)
19. Dedicated, but possibly scared (6)
22. New book (5)
23. Turning point in tax legislation (4)
24. As a container it can't be beaten (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter.
For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.



Arrowword

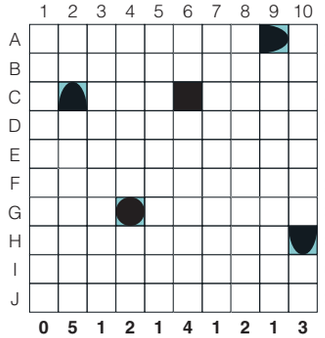


Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

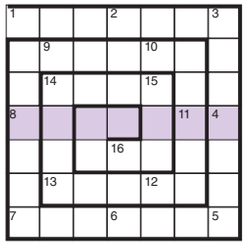
Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



Word Spiral



Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Cook
2. Money reserve
3. Stun
4. Discharge
5. Fish
6. Saracen
7. Dandy
8. Forearm bone
9. Corrosive substance
10. Child's toy
11. Idle
12. Period of time
13. Gardening tool
14. Heinous
15. Minus
16. Type of music

Keyword clue: A musical instrument

SUDOKU

Hard

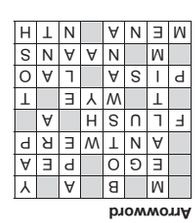
	9			4			6	7
8	2							1
			5		1			
			1	6		8		
4								9
		8		2	9			
					3			
6			2				1	5
3	1			8			2	

Easy

3			6				9	
8	6	2		7				1
	1		5				8	
	8	3		1	6			5
	2				4	8		
7			8		2	1	4	
		4			8		5	
	7		9	3		4	1	2
	9				7			8

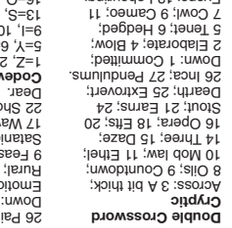
Solutions

Arrowword



Battleships

Double Crossword
Cryptic
Across: 3 A bit thick; 8 Olis; 9 Countdown; 10 Mob law; 11 Ethel; 14 Three; 15 Daze; 16 Opera; 18 Elfs; 20 Stout; 21 Earns; 24 Dearth; 25 Extrovert; 26 Inca; 27 Pendulums.
Down: 1 Committed; 2 Elaborate; 4 Blow; 5 Tenet; 6 Hedged; 7 Cowl; 9 Cameo; 11 Evens; 12 Labouring; 13 Went ahead; 17 Asset; 19 Sacred; 22 Novel; 23 Axle; 24 Drum.
Quick
Across: 3 Emergency; 8 Tane; 9 Fourscore; 10 Gaiter; 11 Class; 14 Pious; 15 Same; 16 Throw; 18 Alas; 20 Abate; 21 Loose; 24 Depict; 25 Carry over; 26 Pair; 27 Snowstorm.
Down: 1 Stagelay; 2 Emotional; 4 Moor; 5 Rural; 6 Excess; 7 Curt; 9 Feast; 11 Curve; 12 Saturnical; 13 Reflectory; 17 Waver; 19 Sorrow; 22 Short; 23 Gain; 24 Dear.
Codeword



Word Spiral
Across: 3 Emt; 5 Tuna; 6 Arab; 7 Bean; 8 Ulna; 9 Acid; 10 Doll; 11 Lazy; 12 Year; 13 Rake; 14 Evil; 15 Less; 16 Soul.
Keyword: Ukulele

Sudoku - Easy

3	4	5	6	8	1	2	9	7
8	6	2	4	7	9	5	3	1
9	1	7	5	2	3	6	8	4
4	8	3	7	1	6	9	2	5
1	2	9	3	5	4	8	7	6
7	5	6	8	9	2	1	4	3
2	3	4	1	6	8	7	5	9
6	7	8	9	3	5	4	1	2
5	9	1	2	4	7	3	6	8

Sudoku - Hard

1	9	3	8	4	2	5	6	7
8	2	5	9	7	6	4	3	1
7	4	6	5	3	1	9	8	2
9	7	2	1	6	4	8	5	3
4	6	1	3	5	8	2	7	9
5	3	8	7	2	9	1	4	6
2	5	7	4	1	3	6	9	8
6	8	4	2	9	7	3	1	5
3	1	9	6	8	5	7	2	4

5 reasons to have a holiday in Britain...

Liz Nice took her sons to a static caravan in Skegness. But was she a convert to the staycation experience?

1 Caravanning has changed. Last time I stayed in a caravan park, aged 8, my brother and I slept end to end on a narrow sofa. But our caravan at Southview Leisure Park in Skegness was nothing like this. It had a kitchen, a lounge with a fluffy carpet, a telly and three bedrooms. You couldn't swing a cat in the singles but my sons are animal lovers so this wasn't an issue. My en suite double was heaven and the bed was the most comfortable I've ever slept in, including my own. Result.

2 British holidays are brilliant My kids' idea of a holiday is a week in Majorca or Greece. This makes them a bit spoiled in my view – I didn't go abroad until I was 15 – and though they have even been to Florida (brats!), they were every bit as happy at Fantasy Island in Skeggy, where they tortured their mother on rides that made her sick. They also loved the famously 'bracing' Skegness beach, flying kites and charging around with no fear of hitting people in the face with their beach tennis bats (there was barely anyone about!) Yes, it was cold but I'm British! I have a coat. And I've never seen my kids happier than when playing crazy golf on the front.

3 You needn't swim in the sea We struggled a bit at the caravan park pool as every time we went to swim, we seemed to arrive at the wrong time. However, we eventually worked out that if we got there just before 9.30am, we could get a good, long swimming session. Just a bit of organisation needed!

4 British holiday food is great, except for the candy floss! The on site fish and chip shop and restaurants were well priced and delicious. But don't eat candy floss from a bag! All of us who bought some in town were very ill. Learn from our error. Otherwise the suffering won't have been worth it!

5 You can't beat an aquarium Especially Skegness aquarium. My boys are still quoting all they learned from 'feeding time' to all and sundry. Also, when my son was sick in the loos (thanks to that candy floss), the staff were so kind, they even made me feel like a good person for telling them!

How to get there

Park: Parkdean Resorts' Southview Leisure Park

Location: Skegness, Lincolnshire, PE25 2LA

Park facilities: This popular holiday park has a wide range of accommodation options including modern caravans and lodges, and is home to the Boathouse Bar & Restaurant, Orangery Restaurant, a convenience store, a nine-hole golf course, amusement arcade, gym, multi-sports court, adventure playground, indoor pool with water flume, steam room and sauna, two fishing lakes, new fish and chip shop, Lakeview Showbar with live entertainment, kids' clubs, crazy golf

What's nearby: Enjoy days out at Skegness Pier, beach, Lincolnshire Wildlife Park, Fantasy Island and Natureland Seal Sanctuary

May half-term price example: Breaks starting from £229 on May 26 for three nights, staying in a two-bedroom Wentworth caravan which sleeps six.

Summer break price example: Breaks from £279 on July 21 for three nights, staying in a two-bedroom Oaklands caravan which sleeps six.

Contact: www.parkdeanresorts.co.uk or call 0330 123 4850

TOP 20 AWARDS 2017 carehome.co.uk

Residents rate Breton Court care home one of the top 20 care homes in South East England

Breton Court in Tenterden, Kent has been chosen by residents and their families as one of the Top 20 care homes in South East England.

There are 3,119 homes in the South East of England, with the top 20 receiving an award from the leading reviews guide to care homes, carehome.co.uk.

The award is based on reviews of the care home written by their residents, plus their friends and relatives.

Davina Ludlow, Director of carehome.co.uk, said:

"We feel the best people to rate a care home are the residents and their families and friends. Their reviews reveal that many care homes are warm and happy places to live, where staff go that extra mile to ensure residents have a good quality of life and feel cared for.

"Breton Court proved that they provide a high standard of care and we'd like to congratulate them on being a Top 20 care home in South East England! It's a wonderful achievement to be recognised for being a highly recommended home by the very people you care for.

"Finding the right care home can be so hard. We hope that our awards will help to make people's care home search that little bit easier."

Kath Jenkins, manager of Breton Court said: I would like to say a big thank you to all my staff, for their hard work, commitment, professionalism and the loving care they give each and everyone of my residents. Care is not just about looking after the residents, but must include the family of that resident, the family should be able to sleep at night knowing that their loved one is being cared for appropriately. Each resident and their family become part of the Breton Court family.

Breton Court Care Home, Grange Road, St Michaels, Tenterden TN30 6EE 01580 762797

feedback

Let's fly Kent's flag with pride

THANK you for making the flag of Kent the cover of last week's issue.

The ancient flag (it pre-dates the English St George's cross) is very rarely seen around the county unfortunately.

However, if you visit other counties, like Yorkshire and Devon, you see their county flags everywhere, from bunting around shops to red ensigns on boats. In fact, the latterly named county created theirs because they were so envious of ours.

I have tried to address this issue by writing to the leaders of Kent County Council and have received support.

However, when I wrote to both Kent's leading tourist organisations, I didn't even receive the courtesy of a reply.

Kentish flags are widely available and are reasonably priced.

Seeing them everywhere would encourage more interest in our historic county and create an identity that would look good for tourism. So, come on Kentish people and businesses, fly our flag with pride!

Trevor Locke,
Sittingbourne

We must tackle road death peril

AS a transport economist can I hope that during the election campaign and afterwards that we will pay more attention to road safety and other accidents?

Whilst the number of people killed on the roads has fallen from around 7,000 a year in the 1970s, to currently around 1,500 a year, and the number of people injured has fallen to around 186,000, this could be reduced if we took it seriously.

I'm surprised that some national newspapers which claim to be in favour of law and order also object to speed cameras when clearly there is a correlation between speed and severity of accidents.

David Spurling,
Sittingbourne

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Option C is destroying the lives of so many

I BOUGHT my house 15 years ago, struggling for many years to pay the mortgage, working seven days a week as a norm.

My house was always to be my retirment pension living on the outskirts of Gravesend and Shorne with a country feel.

I should have known when the Little Chef southbound was grounded and never rebuilt, the ground being constantly tested for years. Highways England love the easy option of carving up countryside - or in their words 'bringing communities together' - without a mention of destroying more and more of our countryside.

Making people's lives a misery, making our villages and hamlets part of towns, destroying our way of life. 10 years from now when you have your desired route it will be useless as the M25 won't cope anyway.

They talk about freeing up millions of pounds, well maybe if they weren't so hell bent on destroying our beautiful countryside and maybe really looked at the benefits of money savings, they would've worked out the Dartford option would be the cheapest. They could have moved the residents around the bridge area and relocated them (as they hate it so much even though they bought houses knowing what was there). Then maybe plant a woodland around the crossings to help absorb the pollution.

Or maybe invest it in making electric cars more affordable? Did no one think of this?

We are just a very small island. When will they stop, or at least try to keep it together as much as possible? I often wonder if the grey people ever walk the fields and woods they have made the decision to destroy or knocked on the doors of people whose lives you are just about to destroy? Or is the next plan to try and get away without paying compensation?

S Ayley
Gravesend

Silent majority oppose Manston

THOSE loud voices trumpeting for the re-opening of Manston as a huge 24/7 cargo hub, frequently claim a large majority across Thanet in support. The reality is rather different.

Firstly, we should remember this is not a matter of public support or otherwise. The former airport site remains in private hands, as it has done for the last 18 years since the old RAF days. The current owners have plans to develop the site for businesses, homes, community amenities and large open spaces, as well as actively recognising its former wartime heritage.

The one interested party, RiverOak, which has been rejected twice in its attempts to buy the site through a compulsory purchase order, is now seeking to bypass the local district council and persuade the government that somehow Manston is an asset of national significance. Fortunately, that attempt is doomed to failure.

Secondly, even if it were a democratic decision, which clearly it is not, there has been no independent and properly conducted survey of public opinion about the future of Manston in the last decade, and reflecting the current proposals for the 24/7 cargo hub.

Those who live under the flightpath, and this includes all in Ramsgate right through to Herne Bay, will be seriously blighted from RiverOak's proposals. This is likely to mean low flights across the town every 15 or 20 minutes throughout the day, and almost certainly through the night as well.

I recently attended a meeting of several residents' groups in Ramsgate. It so happened that the mayor of Ramsgate, Trevor Shonk, was at the event. The matter of Manston was raised. The mayor said that we should give the airport just one more chance. To this everyone in the meeting, to a man and to a woman, reacted with boos and completely shouted down the mayor.

Now, of course, this no more shows the extent of local views than the fake polls conducted by the pro-airport brigade. But it does demonstrate that there are many people in Ramsgate, perhaps the silent majority, who do not wish to see the devastation of their town from such a reopening of the airport.

Simon Crow,
Ramsgate

Tories to blame for our downfall

THE other week I learned, much to my horror, that Dover Police actually has opening hours: nine to five, Monday to Saturday, any issues arising outside those hours (and most, I think it's safe to say, do) are handled, I've been told, by Maidstone.

It got me thinking about the state this place is in, and all thanks to the Conservative Party.

Anyone in this area fated enough to suffer a stroke now has to go to Margate for treatment, by which time the stroke would probably have already annihilated the rest of their life.

The hospitals are horrifyingly understaffed and the grand plan to solve the problem is to just bring in more locums.

The jewels of British countryside the Tories promise to protect keep having houses and USSR style blocks of flats built all over them, and nothing is ever done to enable the surrounding area to cope with the increase in the amount of people wanting to travel through it, even though the roads of Canterbury, for example, are already jam-packed with congestion and parked cars as it is.

The Conservatives are cutting everything not just to the bone but through the bone as well, all as part of their grand plan to solve Britain's (we can hardly say 'Great Britain' anymore) problems by grinding the place into the ground and expecting other people and other countries to buy us out when the world hasn't got two pennies to rub together.

They certainly want to conserve the past, specifically the 1700s when the NHS, police, social care and all the other things we've come to take for granted didn't even exist, and when people held prominent positions of power just because of who they knew.

A land of hope and glory?! This place has been turned into an Eton mess, and to add insult to injury one I'd send back to the chef.

Mike Holman,
by email

your say...

Send us your views.
Write to: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, TN23 1PP
Email: editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
3) Be written in clear, concise English.
4) Not be overly sensational.
5) Have a sense of humour.
6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
8) Highlight topical issues of concern to people living in the county.
9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.
10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.

images of kent

Duckling on the River Stour at Canterbury

by **Oliver Mannion**

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Commercial Vehicles

Sector's balancing act

BRITAIN'S van and light commercial vehicle market has been "re-balancing" after booming last year, according to the Society of Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).

The industry mouthpiece was commenting after a marginal decline of less than one per cent in the first quarter, following record registrations of 2016.

The decline was in lighter weight vans, while bigger load-luggers and pick-ups showed healthy growth; the market's overall resilience is particularly remarkable considering understandable nervousness about the outcome of Brexit negotiations,

SMMT chief executive Mike Hawes said: "The new van market has experienced strong levels of demand in recent years and this dip in registrations represents a natural rebalancing of the market.

"Despite the decline, demand remains at an historically high level with year-to-date registrations matching 2015's performance, which was only exceeded by demand in 2016. We expect demand to remain stable at this high level throughout the year."

ABOVE: Toyota Hilux
RIGHT: Nissan e-NV200

The continuing uptake of new vans is good news for the environment too, with all vans registered now needing to meet strict Euro-6 emissions regulations. These vehicles feature advanced filters to capture 99 per cent of soot particulates, as well as exhaust systems to dramatically cut nitrogen oxide emissions.

There is also increasing demand for electric vans, particularly effective for operators in urban areas where operations may involve lots of stops and starts through both traffic and deliveries. They can also be good for a company's eco image.

*** Read on for tips on how to choose your next workhorse.**

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More than just a box

VANS are still basically boxes to be stuffed with cargo.

Yet operators have seen economy, efficiency and flexibility soar, while drivers have enjoyed better performance, refinement and safety.

Much of this came from car-derived designs: originally modified supermini or family hatchbacks, with blanked out rear windows and a flat load space replacing back seats, but the same driver benefits such as air con and decent sound system

The trend then migrated to larger vans, often derived from the better handling platforms of popular cars too.

Load capacities also grew: from as little as three cubic metres for a hatchback courier, right up to a cavernous delivery van.

Access has improved too. Many larger vans have a low-floor driving compartment for easy access, while most vehicles above supermini class now have a sliding side door as standard to aid loading - many buyers taking the option of a second 'slider'.

And there is usually a choice of side-opening twin rear doors or high lift tailgate, while cab doors generally have a reduced opening angle; it's easier then for a busy driver to grab and close the door, or avoid it swinging wide and hitting something...or someone.

The 'dualiner' is also popular, a van that can seat five and still carry a decent cargo. It's ideal for companies sending a crew on the road plus all their gear, or the owner operator/tradesman who must carry his gear on weekdays, and the family at weekends.

And it's not just vans that are changing, but how they are sold: with advantageous lease and buying plans, a new van offers the latest comfort levels, lowest operating costs from the newest powertrains, and will make you and your customers feel good about the business.

ABOVE: Peugeot Boxer
LEFT: Mercedes Benz Citan

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Book a test-drive

'Van-ity' is all the rage now

PEUGEOT EXPERT.

BELOW: Mercedes Benz Sprint

FASHION'S fickle finger has poked the van market lately, causing a quicker turnover of model designs, according to market watchers at CAP Automotive.

The shelf life of a van design used to last much longer than the faster churning car sector, but that's all changed according to CAP:

"The days when a van was solely regarded as a work tool are certainly coming to an end. The creep of vanity into the van market is a mixed blessing. It ensures a more dynamic marketplace, with exciting and fresh offerings appearing with increasing regularity.

"But it also threatens faster depreciation as model 'shelf life' begins to shorten and end users are constantly drawn to the newest vehicle on offer."

But there is no doubt that van operators are asking themselves whether their van or fleet says the right thing about their operation and its employees.

Does the vehicle look scruffy? Then maybe that's going to put off potential customers: remember that old saying: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

On the other hand, a newer and better kept vehicle should catch the eye in a positive way, maybe aided by a sharp colour scheme or logo. With electric power now viable, might this raise your reputation in customers' eyes as well as helping operating costs?

It's actually not about 'van-ity' but common sense.

Nissan NV300 Van

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5 year TOYOTA WARRANTY

Model shown is PROACE Base Compact 1.6 D 95 DIN hp Manual £18,669.34 + VAT for illustrative purposes only. Offer based on PROACE 1.6D panel van Compact base £18,660+VAT. Price excludes metallic paint at £454.17 ex VAT. Offer applies to *Business users only. Initial rental and VAT applies. Available on new sales of model shown when ordered and proposed for finance between 15th December 2016 and 31st March 2017 and registered and financed by 30th June 2017 through Toyota Financial Services on Toyota Contract Hire. Advertised rental is based on a 3 year non maintained contract at 8,000 miles per annum with an initial rental of £991+VAT. Metallic or pearlescent paint are not included. Excess mileage charges apply. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. At participating Toyota Centres. Toyota Centres are independent of Toyota Financial Services. Terms and conditions apply. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s only. Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC. Registered Office: Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. 5 year/100,000 mile manufacturer warranty subject to terms and conditions.

PROACE Range. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 47.1 (6.0) - 50.4 (5.6), Extra Urban 54.3 (5.2) - 57.6 (4.9), Combined 51.4 (5.5) - 54.3 (5.2). CO_2 Emissions 144g/km - 137g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

Van buying tips

HITS: Toyota Proace, Renalt Kangoo, Peugeot Bipper

- **Size it up** – gauging van space and weight needs is crucial for small or start-up businesses, so opt for one that can grow with your needs. Conversely, a bigger and under-used van could cripple a fledgling business with higher leasing and operating costs.
- **Access** – do you need one or two sliding doors, and will you have to unload in cramped spaces, meaning that twin rear doors will be better than a tailgate?
- **Powertrain** – you'll probably want a diesel, though electric might be good for your firm's image and operating costs if you cover few miles. Opt for an automatic gearbox too for urban or stop-start work.

But if you cram your van and use all of its weight capacity, consider a bigger engine.

- **Do your research** – don't buy a brand just because you like its cars; the van business is different. And check which models win awards: van media tend to be hard-nosed about operating costs, convenience and other aspects – awards will be well earned
- **Take a test drive** – you or a staff member will spend lots of time in the van, so it must work well for the regular driver and be easy to handle and park.
- **Does it look good?** – are appearances important to the company image or, the bottom line, what will the neighbours or 'er indoors think when it's parked outside your house?
- **New or used?** – a new van is better for your business image, and there is the promise of greater reliability and no need for an MOT for three years, but it costs more to acquire. A good compromise is to buy a smart used van with warranty from a main dealer though.

"The monthly payments for the Vito are actually lower than we were paying previously, while the process of arranging the finance was so much easier than it's been in the past. In fact, the package is better in every respect."

Georgina Carter, Operations Director, Rextec UK

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White Van Ma'am

WHITE Van Man has a mate – White Van Ma'am.

The stereotypical driver of the white van used to be someone with discarded drinks bottles and The Sun – open at page three – stuffed behind the windscreen, looking slightly more attractive than his navigator, a Staffordshire bull terrier.

It now appears that such drivers are far more discerning...and likely to be a woman.

An AXA Business Insurance survey showed he or she is likely to be an opera-lover (43 per cent) and probably hasn't been booked for a traffic offence in 10 years (60 per cent), despite more than half spending at least 10 hours a week at the wheel.

Not surprisingly, the poll showed that most van-drivers object to the White Van Man label: only 39 per cent reckoned it was accurate, and only eight per cent owned up to being that man.

In any case, a third of drivers surveyed were women, which might explain why cooking and gardening were high on the list of hobbies, although some pastimes go with the job – 82 per cent regularly go to a football match or watch live on TV, hopefully not while driving.

AA Insurance also researched the increasing number of female van drivers and found many were owner-operators, with female florists being a top category for this new driving class, dubbed 'vantrepeneurs'.

NISSAN NAVARA

Pick-ups picking up

PICK-UPS like the Toyota Hilux (pictured) or Fiat Doblò Work Up are a relatively small but crucial part of the overall UK commercial vehicle market.

This is partly due to a tax anomaly making them attractive to private users, but commercial operators also see them as relatively cheap yet capacious workhorses, available with two or four-door cabs and, in the case of 4x4 models, able to go most places on a farm or construction site.

'Up-spec' double cab versions are particularly popular as they can also take the family at weekends, complete with camping gear, bikes and so on, all secure and weathertight beneath a removable hardtop load bay cover.

RENAULT TRAFIC

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Service Centre
Camer Park Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0AL 01474

Model shown is MG3 Style, with optional Black Roof (optional cost) & MG GS Exclusive, with optional Black Alloy Wheels, Black Mirror Cap, & Black A panel trims(Optional Cost). A 3year/60,000mile warranty is standard on all new MG3's A 5year/60,000mile warranty is standard on all new MG GS models. Fuel consumption figures shown are based on the official EU test figures and are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results. Fuel Consumption MPG(l/km)for MG3 range:Urban37.7(7.5),Extra Urban 57.6(4.9),Combined 48.7(5.8). CO2 Emissions 136 g/km. Fuel Consumption MPG(l/km)for MG GS range: URBAN 37.6 mpg | 7.5 l/100km (Manual) 36.6 mpg | 7.7 l/100km (Auto), EXTRA URBAN 53.2 mpg | 5.3 l/100km (Manual) 53.2 | 5.3 l/100km (Auto), COMBINED 46.3 mpg | 6.1 l/100km (Manual) 45.5 mpg | 6.2 l/100km (Auto). CO_2 EMISSIONS 139 g/km (Manual) 141 g/km (Auto)Urban37.7(7.5),Extra Urban 57.6(4.9),Combined 48.7(5.8). CO2 Emissions 136 g/km.On the road (OTR) prices includes VAT where applicable, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and 12 months' Vehicle Excise Duty. Prices shown exclude optional metallic paint,accessories and graphics packages. Finance available from MG Financial Services, a trading style of GMAC UK plc, PO Box 6666, Cardiff CF15 7YT, subject to status, availability and terms and conditions. Applicants must be aged 18 or over, and guarantees and/or indemnities may be required.Terms and conditions apply Offer available until 30th June 2017 Subject to availability & subject to terms and conditions. . For full details please visit our Gravesend Showroom.

driving

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

CHANGES: Toyota baby gets a major facelift and some new engines, and there's an image-building supercharged hot hatch to come

Toyota breathes fresh life into its old favourite Yaris

TOYOTA set the bar high with the original 1999-vintage Yaris supermini.

It became only the second Japanese model to win Europe's coveted Car of the Year award, arch-rival Nissan having lifted the trophy in 1993 with its own supermini star, the Micra.

But Toyota then faltered with the so-so Mark 2 Yaris, only to recover with the Mark 3 in 2011, now given a major facelift and priced from £12,995.

The world's No1 carmaker had already tweaked the chassis to deliver the driver feedback that makes rivals like the Ford Fiesta, VW Polo and Vauxhall Corsa so popular, but this made the Yaris ride harder.

Toyota has countered this with work to improve on-road refinement, paying particular attention to the petrol-electric hybrid model (from £16,195).

Now an all five-door line-up, the interior also looks funkier and higher quality; the smart touchscreen housing on a coloured facia looks particularly smart.

But the biggest news is on the engine front, where a 110bhp 1.5-litre petrol engine replaces the old 99bhp 1.33 unit, delivering more performance with better economy (58.9mpg combined), while a scorching halo version, the GRMN – inspired by Toyota's Gazoo Racing rally stable – arrives later, with a six-second 0-62mph time predicted.

From a company seemingly obsessed with cultivating a green image, this surprise hot hatch with a supercharged 205bhp 1.8-litre petrol unit should give the Yaris more kudos in a hard-fought sector.

The Yaris has always had decent headroom in the back, while fore and aft adjustment of the rear seats – a feature pioneered in this class by the Mark I – delivers a balance of legroom and boot space, with the latter rising to 286 litres, one of the best in class.

The Yaris's known qualities as a trouble-free and economical supermini backed by Toyota's five-year/100,000-mile warranty, will also help sales.

» Read more of Steve's motoring reviews in…
KENT LIFE

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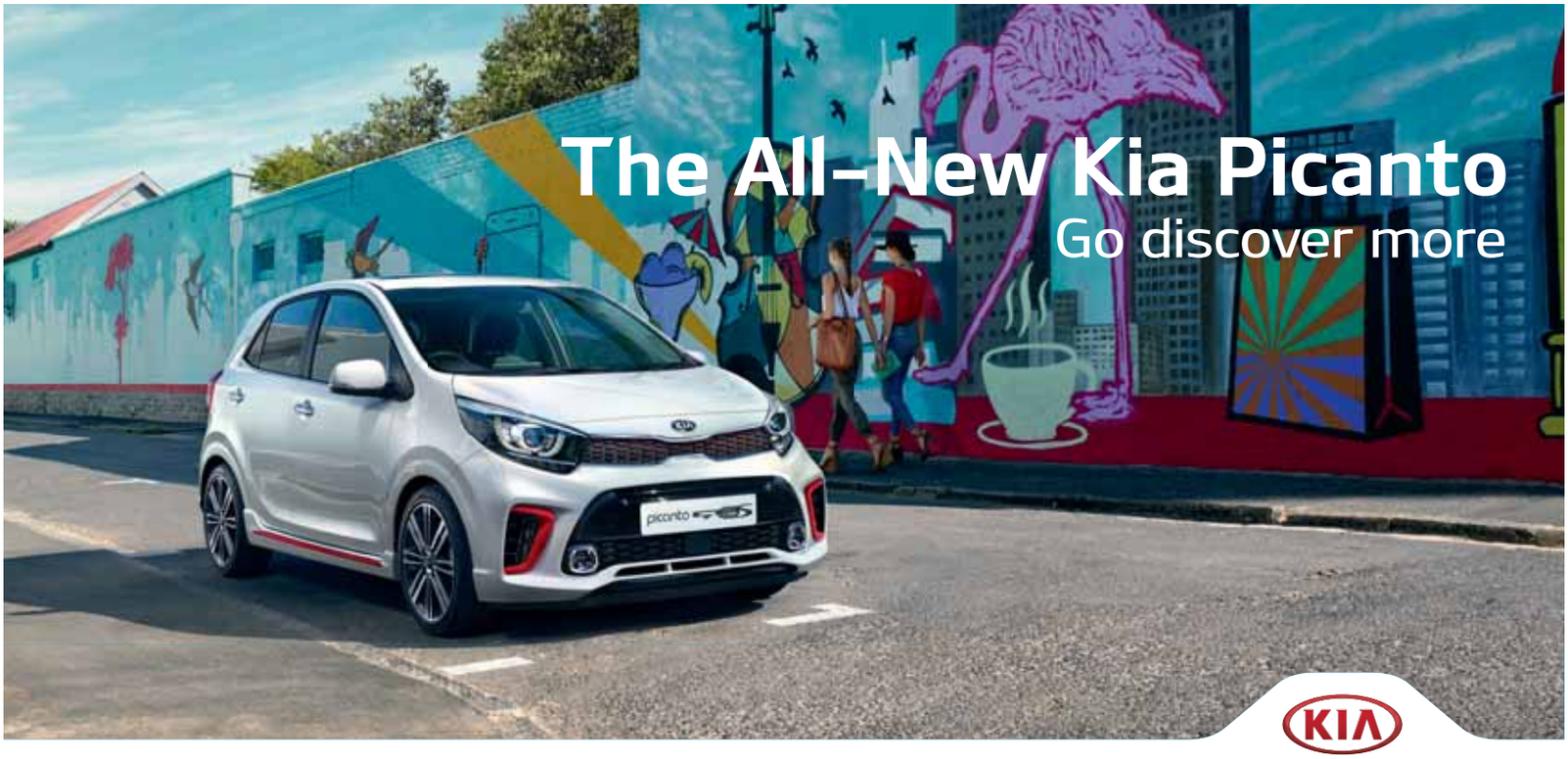

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Fuel consumption in mpg (l/100km) for the All-New Kia Picanto range: Urban 40.4 (7.0) 50.4 (5.6), Extra Urban 62.8 (4.5) – 76.3 (3.7), Combined 52.3 (5.4) – 64.2 (4.4), CO_2 emissions 124 – 101g/km. MPG figures are official EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results. Model shown: All-New Kia Picanto 'GT-Line S' 1.25 83bhp 5-speed manual at £14,200 including optional chargeable clear white paint £250. All-New Kia Picanto range available from £9,450. 7 year / 100,000 mile manufacturer's warranty. For full terms and exclusions visit www.kia.com/uk.

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Motability

5 year TOYOTA WARRANTY

Model shown is Yaris Design 5 door 1.5 VVT-i Manual at £15,845. Price excludes metallic paint at £515. Prices correct at time of going to print. *0% APR Representative and £1,250 Finance Deposit Allowance only available on new retail orders of Yaris (excluding Active grade and Hybrid models) between 1st April 2017 and 30th June 2017 and registered and financed through Toyota Financial Services by 30th September 2017 on a 3.5 year AccessToyota (PCP) plan with 0%-35% deposit. ^Payment shown is based on a 42 month AccessToyota contract with £2,581.00 customer deposit, £1,250 Finance Deposit Allowance and Guaranteed Future Value/Optional Final Payment. Toyota Financial Services (UK) PLC; registered office Great Burgh, Burgh Heath, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5UZ. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Indemnities may be required. Finance subject to status to over 18s. Other finance offers are available but cannot be used in conjunction with this offer. 8,000 miles per annum, excess miles over contracted charged at 8p per mile. Toyota Centres are independent of Toyota Financial Services. Terms and conditions apply. Affordable finance through AccessToyota. 5 year/100,000 mile manufacturer warranty subject to terms and conditions. Participating Centres only.

Yaris Design 5 door 1.5 VVT-i Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 44.9 (5.9), Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2), Combined 56.5 (5.0). CO_2 Emissions 112g/km. All mpg and CO_2 figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience.

From zero to hero once more for Micra?

Nissan has re-energised its supermini credentials with a highly sophisticated and sharp-suited fifth-generation Micra, featuring great British design input

Nissan Micra Acenta IG-T 90

Price:	from £15,115
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Vauxhall Corsa

HAVING allowed its supermini hero to become a zero, Nissan is set to reverse the process.

The latest and newly-launched Micra is bold and entertaining to behold and drive; what a shame we had to wait so long for it.

It used to be Nissan's best known model and even won the European Car of the Year award in 1993, the first time a Japanese marque managed this feat. And the UK embraced the car even more for its then 'homegrown' status as a product of Nissan's Sunderland plant.

But it all went wrong with the 2010 fourth generation Micra; intended to be all things to all men across the globe, it was deemed too staid and fuddy-duddy in the UK and attracted customers to match.

So, an affordable fun image that Nissan had worked so hard to build, collapsed fast, but Nissan could be about to 'Micra-manage' a fast recovery with the fifth-generation car (from £11,995).

With input from Nissan's impressive tech centre at Cranfield, Beds, the newcomer is longer, wider and lower, with a racy five-door wedge profile that sets the Micra apart from obvious rivals and sector champions like the current Ford Fiesta, Vauxhall Corsa and VW Polo and even challenges the image-conscious "designer manbag/handbag" niche that favours the MINI, FIAT 500 and DS3.

Perhaps even more impressive is a chassis spun from the old car and now arguably the class leader, with no apparent compromise between sharpness and comfort.

Three engines are offered for now: a 70bhp 1.0-litre petrol and two 89bhp units, a 0.9-litre petrol turbo and 1.5-litre turbodiesel.

The lively petrol turbo is the star, though the three-cylinder unit develops that format's all too familiar 'angry pheasants under the bonnet' racket when revved, making the diesel comparatively refined, though its extra weight mars the newcomer's nimbleness and there's a £1,330 upfront premium.

The upweight in cabin space, quality, design and appeal is welcome though. Cranfield collated a 200-person European 'all shapes and sizes' portfolio to please as many customers as possible within a car less than four metres long.

The result is class-leading front seat space, through forward/rearward seat travel and rake/reach-adjustable steering wheel.

But the engineers clearly wanted this space to be uplifting too, hence what they call the 'gliding wing' dashboard plus upmarket touchscreen infotainment and optional BOSE sounds, which comes with a CD player.

And a good thing too. Car-makers have been too quick to drop CDs.

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Customer Services Manager - Margate

Full time – 37.5 hours per week **Salary - £25,000 per annum**
Closing date – 08 May 2017 **Interview Date – 25 May 2017**

Qualifications and Experience

- Maths and English GCSE grade C and above (or equivalent)
- Min 2 years' experience within a Customer Relations / Services environment, with proven supervisory experience
- Strong leadership, influencing and management skills to deliver an enhanced customer experience
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Experience in Complaints Management
- Experience of development of quality and / formal accreditation

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Cheryl Lloyds, Matron on 01843 234242

Business Office Supervisor – Dover

Full Time – 37.5 hours per week **Salary: £21K-£23K p.a. dependant on experience**
Closing Date: 10 May 2017 **Interview Date: 24 May 2017**

Qualifications and Experience

- Education to A Level or equivalent
- Maths and English (GCSE or equivalent) Grade C or above
- 2+ Years' experience in a supervisory capacity
- 2+ years' experience within a medical administration environment

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact:
Gemma Preston, Business Office and IG Manager on 01304 222682 or
Danielle Edwards, Business Office Supervisor on 01304 222672

For job descriptions and application forms please visit our website:
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Alternatively please contact Sarah Blaber, HR Assistant
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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice Pursuant to Section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925
In the Estate of
Ronald Mullinger Deceased

ANY person having any claim against or interest in the Estate of Ronald Mullinger Deceased, late of 141 Wakeley Road, Rainham, Gillingham in the County of Kent ME8 8NP who died on the 22nd day of September Two Thousand and Twelve is required to send particulars thereof to the undersigned Solicitors for the Executors of the said Deceased within two months of the date of publication of this Notice after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interest of which they have had notice.

Dated this 7th day of May 2017
County Solicitors
67 High Street, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5LQ
Ref: REN.MUL26/1
Solicitors for the Executors

Pursuant to Section 27 of the Trustees Act, 1925

Name of Deceased: ARTHUR REGINALD DANN
Address: 2 Water's Edge, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6SG
Description: Print Finisher (retired)
Date of Death: 12th June 2016
Name and address of person to whom notices of claim are to be given: Keith Clinton of Gough Clinton & Broom 104 Bellegrove Road, Welling, Kent DA16 3QD
Name of Executor: Clive Martyn Walters and Richard Roland Thomas
Date on or before which notices of claim must be given: 12th July 2017
Address: 104 Bellegrove Road, Welling, Kent DA16 3QD
Capacity: Solicitor

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116 STOPPING UP OF LAND ADJACENT TO HERNE COURT HORN STREET FOLKESTONE

I AM GIVING NOTICE THAT The Kent County Council as Highway Authority for the County of Kent propose to make an application to the Magistrates' sitting at Canterbury Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 6 June 2017 at 10:00 for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highway rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land adjacent to Herne Court Horn Street as on the plan on deposit.

A copy of the draft order and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception of The Kent County Council at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ.

Any person to whom this Notice has been given or who uses the highway specified or who would be aggrieved by the making of the Order may appear before the Magistrates' Court to raise an objection or make a representation on the application. Any person intending to appear before the Magistrates' Court at the hearing of the application is requested to inform Carissa Humphreys by post to Kent Legal Services, Priory Gate, 29 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1PT, by email highwaydefinitionsearches@kent.gov.uk, or by telephone 03000 416285 before 1 June 2017 quoting reference number LS/21/112049/628.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact Carissa Humphreys using the contact details shown above.

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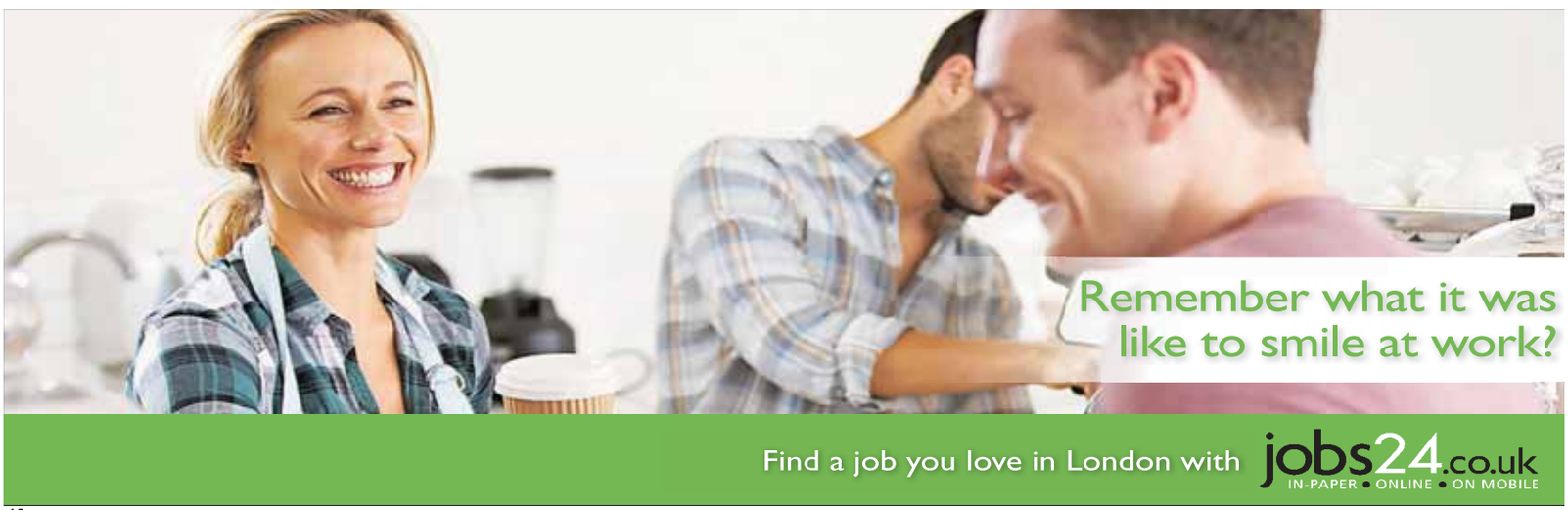

Hawkins tries to take the positives

The Ditton potter was thrashed in his semi-final in Sheffield

Snooker

By Tom Pyman
tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

BARRY Hawkins insists he'll be back after admitting he was disappointed with his performance in a semi-final thrashing at the snooker world championship.

The Ditton potter was far from his best as he limped out of the tournament, going down 17-8 to four-time champion John Higgins at the Crucible Theatre.

The damage was done early on, as Hawkins produced one of his worst sessions of snooker of the season – allowing Higgins to build up a 16-8 lead.

And the Scotsman needed just one frame to set up a final against eventual champion Mark Selby.

But Hawkins was positive after the match, reflecting on a superb season – where he won the World Grand Prix and cemented his place in the top-16, ensuring he will be back in Sheffield this time next year.

But he could not escape the fact that he under-performed in his third world semi-final, when he knew beforehand that he needed to improve on his quarter-final display against Stephen Maguire.

"I struggled from the off and could not get any momentum going." Hawkins said.

"He did not play well either and I think I dragged him down. I was missing and then he started missing, we dragged each other down a little bit.

"If I started playing well, I would have got his level up a little bit. It is a bit disappointing but I am not going to beat myself up.

DISAPPOINTMENT: Barry Hawkins

Pictures: PA WIRE

"There were load of opportunities, you won't catch too many days where John plays like that.

"It was so frustrating, I was trying and trying.

"I was digging in as much as I could but I kept missing and losing the white ball all the time.

"It is a horrible place to be when it gets like that. It can get a little bit embarrassing but I have enough experience to know it is just a bad day at the office.

"I will be back next year. I have had a great season and got to another semi-final, so I can't be too upset."

Mark Selby defended his title with victory on Monday.

County sporting stars handed funding boost

Olympics

THOUSANDS of pounds of funding has been released by the county council to support the training of some of Kent's brightest sporting talents.

Building on the legacy from London 2012, the 42 sportsmen and women aiming to represent Great Britain at future Olympic and Paralympic Games represent a range of sports and include disabled and non-disabled performers.

They are all from Kent and all have been nominated and recognised by their sport's national governing body.

This is the ninth year that Kent County Council, via its Sport and Physical Activity Service, has provided this support to top sports performers.

WINNER: Will Bayley

This year there are also a number of athletes who are aiming for selection for the 2018 Commonwealth Games to be held in Australia, receiving awards ranging from £500 to £1,000 each.

Barbara Cooper, corporate director for growth, environment and transport at KCC said: "I am delighted that we are able to support a number of Kent's talented sports performers with targeted grants and hope that this support will assist them in their future ambitions to be successful at world level competition.

"We are very proud that some of the performers who received and continue to receive support from KCC competed and won medals at the Rio 2016 Games; and I hope that others will be able to follow in their footsteps and feature at major sporting events on the international stage in the next 12 months."

Sport Shorts

» Email **sports@kosmedia.co.uk** or call **Tom Pyman** on **01233653477**

Dover sensation Miller signs deal with Posh

RICKY Miller has officially agreed to join League One side Peterborough United from Dover Athletic after weeks of speculation.

The striker completed a medical on Wednesday and will link up with his new teammates for pre-season training at the end of June.

Miller, who scored 42 goals for Dover, was named the National League player of the year last week and helped Chris Kinnear's side to a Kent Senior Cup win on Monday.

"I am delighted that Ricky has signed," said Posh boss Grant McCann.

"We are pleased it is all done and dusted now. He has been the top player in the Conference, has scored over 40 goals and he is a winner. He knows where the back of the net is and I am looking forward to working with him."

Director of football Barry Fry added: "Ricky has done brilliantly to score the amount of goals he has and hopefully he will come here and hit the ground running."

BOSS: Chris Kinnear

INJURED: Luke Hopkins recovers in hospital

Teenage prodigy ruled out for next six weeks

TEENAGE motorcycling sensation Luke Hopkins has been ruled out of action for six weeks after breaking his collarbone in free practice at Assen last weekend.

The 15-year-old from Sittingbourne high-sided coming out of a turn and landed heavily on his shoulder, causing the break and requiring hospital treatment.

He was able to return home the following day to recover, but is unlikely to be back on the bike before the end of June.

"I just high-sided as I accelerated from the corner and the next I knew was there was a lot of pain in my right shoulder and I was in the gravel," he said.

"I'd like to thank the marshals and medical staff at the circuit and the hospital for looking after me so well."

Fleet and Darts in play-off action

NORTH Kent rivals Dartford and Ebbsfleet United are both in action today (Sunday) as they bid to meet each other in the National League South play-off final.

The first legs of their respective semi-finals were played on Wednesday night, and the two sides remain very much in their ties going into this weekend's clashes.

Ebbsfleet are 2-1 up following victory over Hampton & Richmond Borough while the Darts played out a goalless draw with Essex outfit Chelmsford City.

The final - where teams will compete for promotion to the top tier of non-league football - takes place the following Saturday.

In the final last year, Fleet suffered defeat to fellow county side Maidstone United, who came out on top in a dramatic penalty shootout at Stonebridge Road.

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